


IDE LIGHTS ON
ENGLISH SOCIETY



KETCHES FROM LIFE,
SOCIAL & SATIRICAL

E. C. GRENVILLE MURRAY.





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THE COUNTRY-HOUSE FLIRT.

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SIDE-LIGHTS ON ENGLISH SOCIETY:

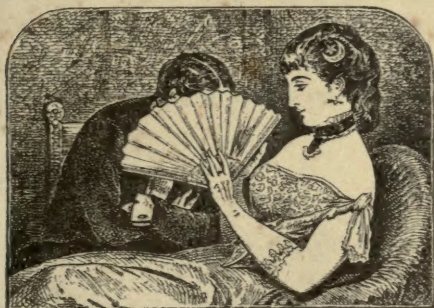
SKETCHES FROM LIFE, SOCIAL & SATIRICAL.

BY

instace
E. C. GRENVILLE MURRAY,

AUTHOR OF "UNDER THE LENS: SOCIAL PHOTOGRAPHS," "HIGH LIFE IN FRANCE
UNDER THE REPUBLIC," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED WITH NEARLY 300 ENGRAVINGS.



SEVENTH EDITION.

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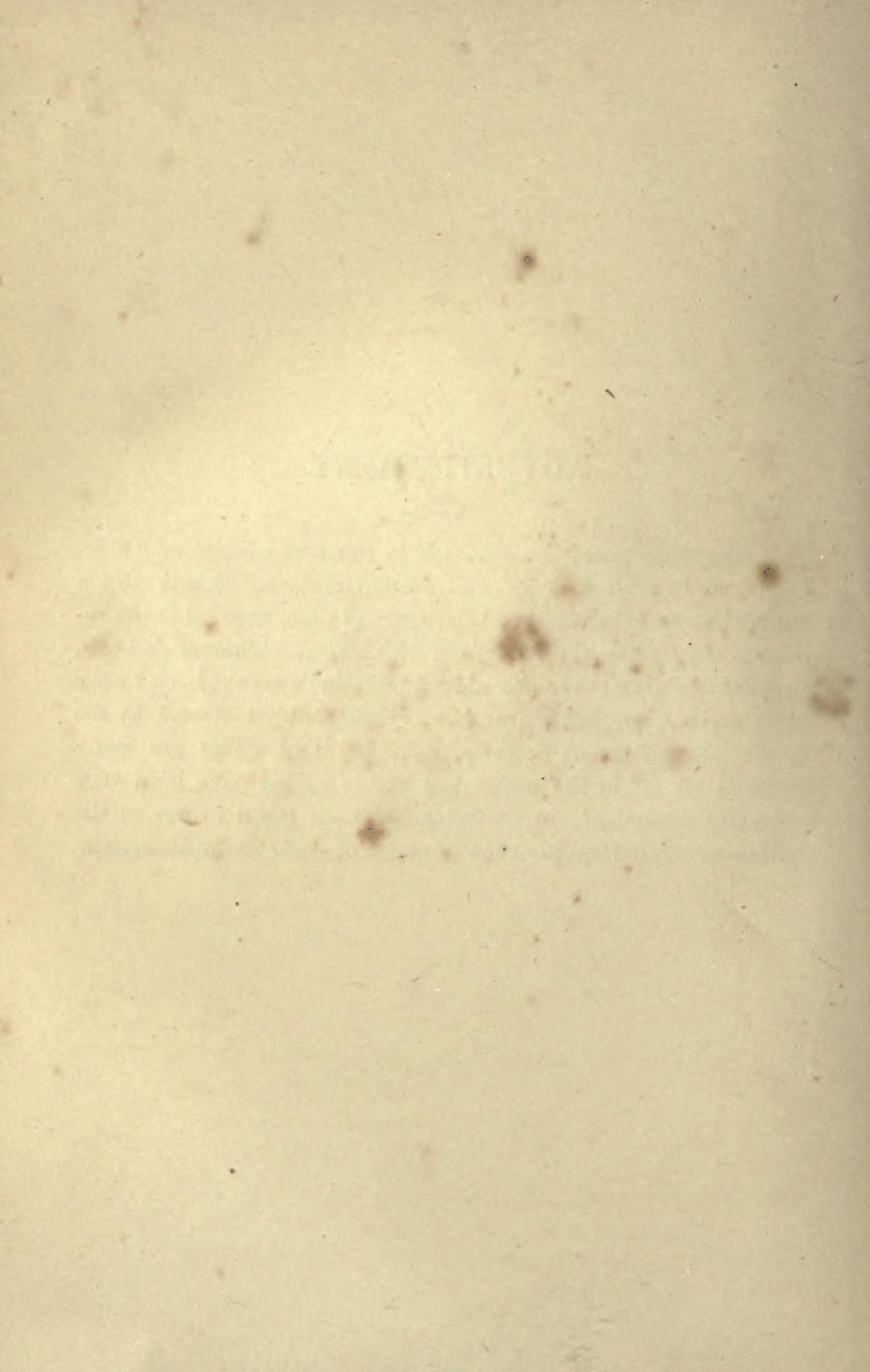
1885

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE favourable reception accorded to the first edition of "Side-Lights on English Society," and the circumstance of this edition having become exhausted in a brief space of time, have led to the re-issue of the work in its present form with several additional chapters. In acknowledging the commendation bestowed upon the book by the press and the appreciation of it so unmistakably indicated by the public, the publishers desire to point out that whilst the many portraits hit off by the satiric pen of the author have been very generally recognised, no exception has been taken to any of the statements made respecting the originals of these clever likenesses.



TO
THE QUEEN.

MADAM,

A threefold purpose has animated me in dedicating this book to your Majesty. In the first place, as a loyal subject, I eagerly embrace the opportunity of laying before you the tribute of my homage. In the second place, I am proud, as a man of letters, to seek for my work the notice of a Sovereign, not the least of whose titles to the gratitude of a distant posterity will be, that in her reign, and owing, in no small degree, to her fostering care, arts and letters have so flourished in this island that the Age of Victoria may challenge comparison with the Ages of Elizabeth and Anne. Thirdly, as an Englishman, I venture to submit for the consideration of the Head of our race a careful study of some of the most important aspects of English society, as at present constituted.

A survey of the life of the English people leaves one much to be thankful for, especially the fact that its best expression is modelled on the pure example of your Majesty's life. But if this nation is to continue to lead the vanguard of progress, and persistently to move towards the perfect ideal of a great kingdom, united under the sway of a beloved line of Princes, it is obvious that it behoves us to look the defects of our social and political system boldly in the face, neither extenuating aught, nor setting down aught in malice. An evil acknowledged is half cured; above all, in the country for which your Majesty's ancestors did so much to secure the price-

less boon of liberty of thought and discussion. Much, however, remains to be done ; and our very freedom, which none dare openly attack, is at this moment exposed to subtle and dangerous machinations.

Your Majesty's prerogative and the mighty influence of your august person have been steadily exercised, throughout a long and glorious reign, in support of every cause that approved itself to the best spirits of the time. Your Majesty's gracious intervention has redressed many a wrong, has given hope to the oppressed, and taught the most powerful of the earth to respect the unwritten laws of equity and honour.

That your Majesty may long be spared to be the protectress of the weak and the terror of evil-doers, and still to direct your people in the way of peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, is the fervent prayer,

MADAM,

Of your Majesty's most devoted grateful Servant,
and faithful Subject,

E. C. GRENVILLE-MURRAY.

PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

SOCIETY is a many-headed thing; it is not easy to take its photograph; and perhaps a too faithful likeness would not be accepted by those who know it best as a correct portrait.

This is the difficulty. Society wears a conventional expression, and has struck a conventional attitude once and for all. Like the customers of the late Madame Rachel, she covers her face with pearl-powder and rouge, and means to be beautiful for ever. The artist must not be curious to see what lies under her enamelling. Mr. Du Maurier's clever young painter, who won renown and wealth by doing the portrait of Lady Midas, showed the way which all writers might, perhaps, if they consulted their own interests, follow with most profit. But how would Hogarth have painted Lady Midas? How would her ladyship have fared at the hands of George Cruikshank, Mr. Sambourne, or Signor Pellegrini?

The writer must claim the same liberty as the artist, the more so as his works obtain a lesser publicity. The books of Fielding and Smollett—possibly Thackeray's *Book of Snobs* too—are not read by new thousands every day; but Hogarth's pictures, multiplied indefinitely by engraving, are seen constantly by millions of eyes all the world over. There are fashions in printed matter; but apparently none in pictures, which, if true to life, are admitted to an everlasting popularity. All critics cry to the artist, 'Copy Nature—avoid the lay-figure.'

Probably Society in the eighteenth century did not much relish the satire of the 'Mariage à la Mode;' and we know how George II. expressed himself about the 'March of the Guards

to Finchley.' That picture is now the chief ornament of the collection at the Foundling Hospital. Is it that the Governors of the Foundling have become less loyal? No; but because the picture is recognised as a good piece of painting, throwing a valuable 'side-light' on queer manners which have now passed out of existence. And doubtless, if his Majesty's pet soldiers mended their ways, Hogarth's sermon in oils had something to do with it.

When there is a tacit understanding among public men that Government must be carried on by an organised system of falsehood, deceit, and injustice; when no official statement, however solemn and precise, can claim respect or belief; when all but the rich are driven from the judgment-seat, and hope for the orderly redress of wrongs is mocked by law-costs; when our social polity arouses serious and widespread discontents; when administration is paralyzed by parliamentary insanity, Reform is needed, and Reform is near.

It is no longer a party question; it concerns every person who can distinguish between right and wrong; and if many powerful individuals are always opposed to the public interest, sensible people should unite to detect them, and to put down their influence. But if we reward every one who ventures to lift his voice against existing abuses with ostracism; if officials who profit by notorious abuses are allowed to silence honest accusers, with rattening and slanderous clamour, it is hard to see what can be done. Nepotism and patronage are at the bottom of it; and all that has been discovered about patronage shows that it is most often given for fear or money. Such facts look ugly in print; but Dapper and Capper can talk of them with perfect coolness at their clubs, and so can Flapper.

It is positively marvellous that the best talent of our land has so long remained in voluntary obscurity, and that men who have made politics the study of their lives are content to write their own degradation daily in essays and leading articles, as though the good things and honourable professions of this world were the natural heritage of dolts only. It is quite disconcerting again to think how noble a calling diplomacy might be, and to see how pitiful a thing it is. It was the business of my choice. It cost me

a great deal of money to follow it; and I was ultimately hustled out of active service by a clerk who had embezzled my salary. But for seventeen years I worked at diplomacy as an ambitious lawyer drudges at the law. I loved it as a soldier loves his sword.

In a word, I believed in it. Diplomacy seemed to me that which it might and should be—a simple and peaceful method of furthering all the best and highest interests in the world. I considered it the nurse, the tutor, and guardian of commerce; the pioneer of science; the harbinger of peace, destined to banish strife and discord from the earth. I thought that it should teach nations to know and understand each other so well that disputes and misapprehensions would become impossible, and that it should be the messenger of kindness and good-will among all peoples.

I collected, with laborious care, whatever seemed to me in any way to bear upon the duties I had, or might have, to perform. No fact appeared to me too trifling, no research too minute, that gave me a clearer knowledge of things belonging to my profession. By these means I slowly accumulated some facts and useful precedents; and I spent ten years of my life in compiling a work on international law. A deceased clerk alone knows what has become of it. It was seized by his order, together with my private papers, now (1881) near three lustres since; and I have never been able to get news of them, though the Queen herself very kindly supported my application to a Secretary of State for the return of my lost property. I should say that her Majesty most graciously did so, but it was really a *kind* act; and I like to speak of it, as it is graven in my heart.

I have written these lines with all the sad and yearning love which an exile feels towards his country. I have suffered twelve years of banishment—not from any displeasure of my Sovereign, or from popular clamour, but from the resentment of an official who had grown rich and influential by the misappropriation of public money; and though he has long since gone to render his account before a tribunal where no demurrer can be pleaded, his work survives him. No good can be done but through some man's sorrow. It is enough for me to have laboured to a great end in books which have found favour from many indulgent readers. I look upon the public as a genial friend, in whose company one

need never weary; and having worked, according to my most inadequate ability, to make some things better than they are, I can listen to the outcry of those whose illicit gains stand in jeopardy, without being much disturbed by it. 'It is an ill bird,' they say, 'who fouls his own nest.' True. But what should be said of the bird that seeks to cleanse it?

Unhappily, no evil can be attacked without saying some hard things of persons who gain by it. Every man belonging to that class then seeks out the cap that fits him, puts it on his head triumphantly, as if he had made a discovery creditable to his discernment, and, though no personal affront was meant him, imprudently claims a right to be angry. Some people who go thus in search of grievances may be merely weak-minded folk, who are only doing wrong in an orthodox way, as their fathers did before them. They feel at once sore and ill-used, therefore, when their queer little trades are described in plain language. They believe that it is a proper and constitutional thing to wax fat in idleness, and to kick against all who interfere with their complacent enjoyment of other folk's goods. When I have been obliged to write home truths about them, I have always done so with reluctance; and have sincerely regretted that it was impossible to call public attention to much mischief in any other way.

After all is said and done, however, the pursuit of literature is scarcely satisfactory. When our best labours are over, we feel that so much might have been done which has been left undone, and that what has been done might have been done better. The opinions of a writer at the conclusion of his task are seldom precisely the same as when he began it, and the most thoughtful workman in revising his book will find some passages on which he would have bestowed more care, and others which he would, perhaps, have rejected altogether. I think, therefore, if I were to write these pages over again, I should treat some subjects with a sterner pen, and more emphatically denounce the follies and absurdities which I have touched here and there with too light a hand. Reader, farewell!

E. C. GRENVILLE-MURRAY.

PARIS, *June 1st*, 1881.

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FLIRTS.

I.

ABOUT FLIRTS IN GENERAL.



MOST persons possess some good qualities, know this, and wish others to know it. The process of making them known to one's own sex may be characterized under various names, while the endeavour to attract the opposite sex by

them—and at the same time toying, as it were, with the passion of love—constitutes Flirtation.

One can obtain the appreciation of one's own sex by doing ordinary duties well; but to gain the good-will of the other sex, who

may not be in a position to judge of our genuine merits, requires a manner more or less artificial. Flirtation is, therefore, a forced means of making oneself agreeable to a person of the other sex. In the greater or less transparency of the artifice lies the science of flirting, which has infinite shades, from unblushing coquetry to the most delicate power of fascination. Society would be a dull thing without this science. If it were possible that women should cease for a short time to care what men thought about them, most of us, moralists or not, would be glad to see that short time ended.

Men and women flirt, but women more than men, and they also show it more. Women are less able than men to live without admiration, and have less other work in life than the labour of securing praise. At the same time they cannot so well keep their flirtations out of sight. A man travels, and is, in very few places, really intimately known; a woman is, in some few places at least, closely watched. None of a man's friends know precisely with how many women he flirts; a woman's friends keep an exact account of the number of her admirers. A man, to be called a Flirt, must flirt to the point of abandoning all other occupation; but a very little affability, squandered under the form of smiles, procures the title for a woman.

A girl is a Flirt who exchanges a coy glance with a middle-aged eligible bachelor who picks up a glove she has dropped; she is something worse than a Flirt—a minx—if she makes herself pleasant to another girl's betrothed. The iron rule of modesty, which men have imposed upon women as a protection against their wiles, leaves young women scarcely free to move or speak in the presence of the trousered sex without risk of being thought 'forward;' but women themselves are much sterner in their definition of forwardness than men. In feminine judgment every girl or pretty young woman is forward, and consequently a Flirt, who monopolizes the attention of males in a social circle. This she can do by being too modest, as well as by being not modest enough; for her own sex will not account as modesty the grace which charms without attempting to do so. Men never speak so ill of the worst women as women do of the best among their sex who have the art of pleasing. There are men whom all other men join in praising; but there has scarcely lived a woman—wife, virgin, or saint—who has not had detractors amongst other women. Should there have been some few exceptions which prove this general rule, they will

be found to have flourished in the ranks of the fearfully and unutterably ugly.

Every woman has flirted; but we are not concerned with the woman whose innocent flirtations are but the gush of youthful spirits, or with those who owe the title of Flirt to the mere malignity of their own sex. The Flirts of whom we propose to treat are those who flirt of *malice prepense*. In these flirting is the art of sexual tantalisation.

It may also be termed, less philosophically, the art of playing with fire and getting scorched, more or less often. All Flirts burn themselves, once at least. Some squeal when they but singe their finger-tips, and retire straightway from the game with their eyes full of tears. These are third-class Flirts, having no real heart in the play. The recollection of their first smart makes them redden and tingle till they become old women, when, perhaps, they smile, and wish the burn could come over again. It was a third-class Flirt who, on the strength of a short and sharp acquaintance with the ways of the other sex, invented such sayings as 'Man is perfidious.'

The second-class Flirts get frequently burned without ever quite inuring themselves to the pain. They resemble dullish boys who play at football because they must, but never surmount the fear of being shinned. Sometimes the second-class Flirt gives up playing, and learns to laugh at her burns; more often she goes on till she can play no longer, and wearily sums up her experience of the sport as 'all burns and no pleasure.'

But the first-class Flirt cares not a pin for scorches. She is the salamander who lives in the fire. Sparks fly round her and she revels in them; she is all over scars, and surveys them complacently as a soldier does his wounds. Flirt from the nursery, Flirt in her teens, Flirt in her prime, she continues flirting when she is an old woman, and flirts on her deathbed with the doctor. If she could come to life for a moment in her coffin, she would flirt with the undertaker. Commend us to this class of Flirt for making the heads of men flame like the tops of lucifer-matches. She sets quiet households a-fire; everything turns to tinder on her passage, and when she is buried an odour of brimstone hovers over her tomb. Her old lovers would be afraid to lift up the grave-slab that covers her lest they should see little blue-forked flames leap out diabolically.

We are not sufficiently versed in etymology to say when the word 'Flirt' first came into use, and from what it is derived. It seems



to have dethroned the French *coquette*, which appears frequently in the writings of eighteenth-century authors; but *coquette*, which is described by some as a polite variant of *coquine*, and by others as the mere feminine of *coquet*, which, though it now means 'natty,' originally had the same signification as our English coxcombish, or *cock's-comb*. The word *coquette* is not much more than two centuries old. How were Flirts and coquettes called before that? The inconstancy of woman is no new thing, alas; and though not catalogued in Scripture among the ills to which human flesh is heir, it drew many a dolorous ode from the earliest writers of Greece and Rome. Anacreon made epigrams on the subject; and Horace, in his plaintive lines to Barine, the 'terror of Roman mothers,' tells her that he could not believe her perfidious oath under any circumstances.

Matters had certainly not improved in the chivalrous ages, when knights spent half their time in fighting for their mistresses, and the other half in cursing their fickleness; and Francis I. is found scratching upon a window-pane, still to be seen in the Château de Blois :

‘Souvent femme varie,
Bien fol qui s’y fie.’

Shakespeare, who wrote under the reign of a Flirt, had plenty to say in disparagement of women, and drew many Flirts without giving them that name. Portia and Beatrice were both pretty fair triflers, and so was Rosalind, of whom her lover warbled :

‘As the cat seeks after kind,
So will lovely Rosalind.’

But a good apology for flirting is put into Othello’s mouth when he says, in defence of Desdemona, that it is no reproach to a woman if she lays herself out to be pleasing. He subsequently departed from this view, when he smothered his wife ; but this little piece of hastiness did not alter the soundness of his previous conclusions.

The truth is, that Shakespeare lived in an age when centuries of knight-errantry, joustings, floral games, courts of love, and what not, had taught women to think a vast deal of themselves. They flirted more than now, perhaps, only men had learned to bear it better. A poor wretch who had been fighting three years for his lady-love in the Holy Land returned to claim her after this probation : but their meeting befell on a day when it was pouring cats and dogs ; whence it arose that the knight, as he threw himself at his mistress’s feet with both knees in a puddle, besought her to get under shelter, and cast his mantle over her shoulders. The lady, instead of being touched by this care for her health, was indignant. ‘What!’ she exclaimed. ‘If you have eyes to perceive that it rains at such a moment as this, you cannot love me!’ And she condemned him, for his breach of gallantry, to remain silent for a whole year, if he would win her. That sort of thing would not do nowadays. It belonged to an epoch when women doled out their smiles economically, and thought a man well indemnified for wounds or chronic rheumatism by leave to kiss their finger-tips. A disgusted Scot, who seems to have been ahead of his age, wrote, in Jamie VI.’s time :

‘O, the lasses o’ the Cannongate,
They are so wondrous nice ;
They wulna gi’e a single kiss
But for a double price.
Gar hang ‘em ! gar hang ‘em !
Each upon a tree,
For I’ll get as gude outside the gate
For a baabee !’

Did he get a good kiss for a baubee? We doubt it. He may have stolen the kiss and paid the baubee afterwards, as conscience money; but the canny fellow's having appraised the lowest market-



able value of a kiss at a halfpenny—worth a shilling of our money—goes far to show that this agreeable salutation was not held cheap. However, our Scotsman deserves to be noted as a social reformer, who protested against the airs which women were giving

themselves. He said, 'Gar hang 'em!' as the Edinburgh mobs used to hang bakers in those days, when they sold their loaves too dear; and he advocated the cheapening of the relations between sexes, which is a boon not to be lost sight of among the other debts we owe to the Land o' Cakes.

A hundred years later a French courtier, visiting Scotland, was enabled to chronicle that an admirable feature in North British maidens was the fondness they showed for embracing strangers on both cheeks. There has since been a slight reaction in these matters; but never mind—every Scotch lassie now subscribes to the doctrine:

'Gin a body
Kiss a body,
Need a body cry?'

It was the Puritans who, in England, first reminded women that they were made to suckle fools and chronicle small-beer. Drab gowns and a modest demeanour were the things they enjoined, and women have testified their appreciation of this reform by their unwavering retrospective allegiance to the Cavalier party ever since. Charles II. did but restore the reign of women for a brief space; and soon the Georgian era was to come, with its days of hard drinking, which turned men into sots, unfit to be flirted with. When gallants rolled under the table after dinner, of what power were soft glances and witching smiles? The bottle is woman's worst rival: she knows it; and the only wonder is that, in the fierce tussle for supremacy which now ensued between Drink and Woman, the receptacle for liquor should have been able to hold its own for more than a hundred years.

There never was such a graceless, loveless, flirtless period as the last century. Men treated women like tavern-wenches, and, having wooed them between two hiccoughs, eloped with them on the spur of a tipsy impulse. There were Mayfair marriages, Fleet marriages, and marriages at Gretna Green. The hot blood of the day, whiskified and lustful, was too impatient to brook a long courtship or the delay of banns or license. The Duke of Hamilton married one of the Misses Gunning with a bed-curtain ring; and abductions of heiresses by penniless rakes were so frequent that Parliament had to legislate on the matter. In that period of rowdy boozings, prize-fights, cock-fights, punch-clubs, and duels, society staggered, and its morals smelt of the bagnio. It was deemed a compliment

to a woman to make her the toast of a drunken orgy; and as many women passed over to the enemy, which they had fruitlessly com-



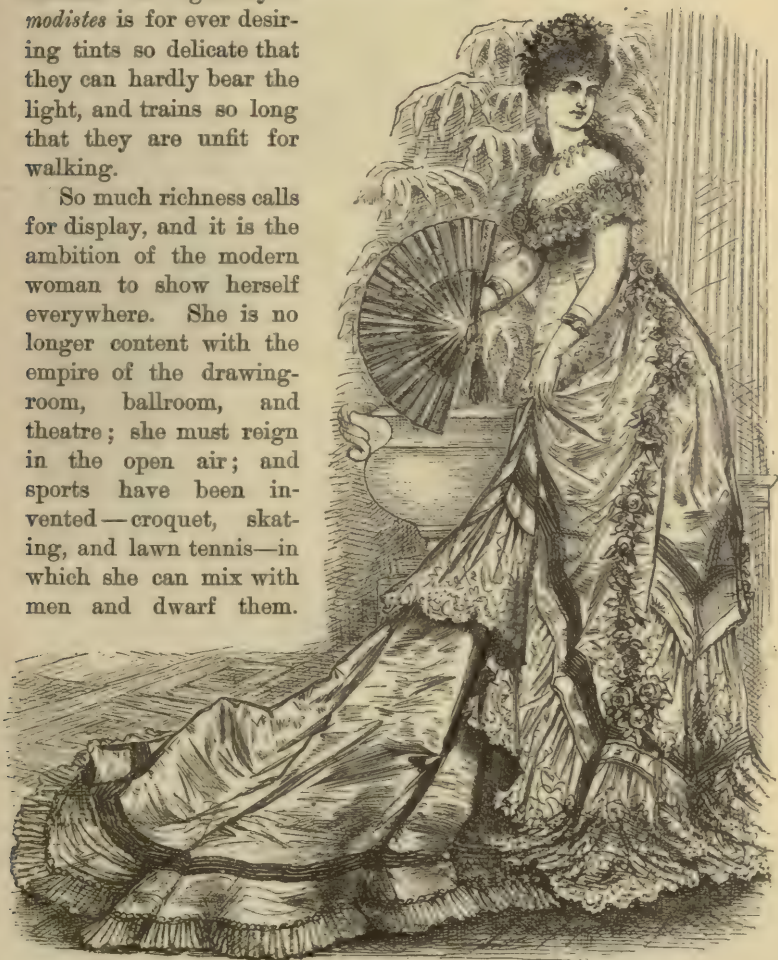
bated, and began to drink as hard as the men, powder and patches came into fashion to hide flushed cheeks and swollen eyelids.

Pah! it reeks with a foul whiff, that corrupt eighteenth century; and nothing less than the five-and-twenty years' war which ushered in the nineteenth was needed to make its men sober and its women coy once more. In the life of camps the love for women burns with a purer light; and the brave are ever gentle, courteous, and timid towards the weak. Then poets arose amid the clash of our arms; and after Waterloo, Scott, Byron, Moore, and the Lakeists drew English thoughts towards chivalrous romance and pastoral idyl. The accession of a girl-Queen did the rest; and gradually, as the Sovereign's influence, as wife and mother, pervaded the Court, and spread thence over the people, woman's ascendancy swelled to the full flood again, till it eventually overflowed, and feminised the whole surface of society.

We nowadays heap all our luxury on our women. Men have renounced the gold-laced coats, ruffles, and jewellery of their forefathers; but they cover their women with the costliest textures and with rivers of precious stones. Nothing is too plain or ugly for

male attire, nothing too gaudy for woman's; and while the tailor's bill shrinks every year through the invention of rough colourless cloths impossible to wear out, the milliner's expands every season, because the ingenuity of *modistes* is for ever desiring tints so delicate that they can hardly bear the light, and trains so long that they are unfit for walking.

So much richness calls for display, and it is the ambition of the modern woman to show herself everywhere. She is no longer content with the empire of the drawing-room, ballroom, and theatre; she must reign in the open air; and sports have been invented—croquet, skating, and lawn tennis—in which she can mix with men and dwarf them.



Balls have been multiplied for her sake, till there is not a householder with ten square feet of parlour but bids his friends once



or twice a year to a carpet dance; picnics have become the rage; water-parties and walking-tours exhibit woman's taste in fancy costumes, and her powers of hand and foot, for she does not disdain to pull an oar, and will back herself for a 'discretion' to walk long distances. She has invaded the hunting-field and shooting-covert; she has climbed on to the box-seat of four-in-hands; and reforming our religion according to her own views of the æsthetic, she has given us Ritualism. The club remained, until lately, as a last refuge to man; but mixed clubs like the Orleans and the Lotos have already been started, and, before long, woman will have forced open the doors of other houses. This will be the crowning triumph at which she has been aiming for years, and when she has



achieved it, man's subjection will be complete. Then we shall see floating over White's and the Marlborough the emblem of female supremacy—a cambric handkerchief scented with opoponax.

II.

THE FLIRT'S POWER.

THE goal of woman is marriage, and flirting is to girls a means of reaching the goal; in the case of married women it is a pastime, a consolation, or a vengeance. Both the girl and the married Flirt proceed by the same methods, though the one faces the goal and the other turns her back to it. The career of the former may close at the altar in great honour, that of the latter is apt to end with a tumble into the Divorce Court; for the essence of flirting is, that it is a stolen pleasure and a speculation, whose future results cannot be foreseen.

Flirting is, anyhow, a pleasant thing; and, without looking so far as to see how it ends, one may acknowledge it as a source of the most gratifying emotions obtainable on this earth. What would society be without it?—from the modest girl whose unconscious arts encourage the bashful lover to be bold, down to the experienced coquette, who shoots with an unerring aim glances that are meant to leave a festering wound. Every woman who flirts stimulates for the moment the vanity of the man whom she tries to please. Flirting is flattery in action. It may be so delicate as to leave a balm on the wounds it inflicts; and since of all forms of vanity the ambition to charm the other sex is, in both men and women, that which is first born and last dies, and which moreover rages strongest whilst it lives, there is no limit to the voluptuousness which may be caused by exciting it.

The imagination of the man who is flirted with expands into radiant visions; his blood flows in quicker pulses. Look at him when the eye of the coquette falls upon him deep and quiet, or light and playful, or with an electric flash. However worn and prosy he may be, his face beams, he throws out his chest, his voice is tuned into the softest inflections, or becomes uncontrollable from sudden emotion. So long as his charmer is within sight, he follows her with his gaze, dumbly soliciting a second glance, as a man holds out his glass to be refilled; and when she is gone, he glides into the most pleasing pensiveness. He is castle-building. No

matter how often a man may have been mocked, the coaxing, caressing look of some new face, seen for the first time, will elevate him over present cares, and make him, it may be but for a brief instant, a poet. Eclogues and epics, fairer than have ever been printed, are composed daily in the hearts of commonplace men who



AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY COQUETTE.

could not rhyme two lines on paper; for every man is able to imagine himself the hero of a romance, and the woman who inspires that romance gifts him with the fancy to create a heroine.

Women would be too vain if they could realise the power of their seductions. It is lucky for men that they cannot. They themselves have no such impressionability as men, except in cases

where their hearts or fortunes are deeply involved. A woman loves once in her life, and it is in the power of her lover to throw her, by a mere look, into shivering fits or silent ecstasies; she can also, on occasions, be made extremely wretched or happy by a man whom she does not love, but desires to marry. Save in these instances, however, she cares nothing for man's looks. A male Flirt may amuse, offend, or frighten her; but there will be no magic thrilling in her sensations, no giddy whirl of her mind, no castle-building. How coldly impervious a pure-minded woman can be to incendiary declarations was seen in poor Werther's case:

‘Charlotte, when she saw his body
Borne before her on a shutter,
Like a well-conducted person,
Went on cutting bread-and-butter.’

But supposing the situation had been reversed, and Charlotte, instead of a staid matron, had been a girl Flirt, setting her cap at Werther, a well-conducted married man, would Werther have remained insensible? Not likely. There is no use in denying that men cannot match women in callous propriety; for neither age, nor dignity, nor marriage-vows will steel them against the shafts of the Flirt.

A little saucy-eyed girl of seventeen will turn the head of a prudent king, make a hoary statesman forget his intriguing business, and drive a pious bishop into terrible wrestling with the devil. It is this universal laxity in men's morals which arms women with their tremendous power—power of which, we repeat, few of them can guess the extent. But some of them do guess it in time, and make a wild use of their weapons of offence out of pure malice, and without a thought of deriving any advantage from their recklessness beyond the intimate satisfaction of having done mischief. Cruelty is no name for the heartless deliberation with which some of these pretty creatures will plunge a dagger into the heart which they have first set fluttering to assure themselves of its being alive.

Say, for instance, that a young man at the opera, standing up in the stalls between the acts to reconnoitre the boxes, lets his glance fall upon a woman of surpassing beauty. Their eyes meet, and she does not turn hers away, but examines the man a moment, smiles vaguely, and then goes on talking with her box-companion. But in another moment she has looked again at the man, and this time, when their eyes meet, a tinge of modest confusion overspreads her



THE FLIRT AT THE OPERA.

“She sweeps by with the coldest of unconscious stares.”

cheeks ; she hesitates, then throws a wistful glance, which says, as plainly as possible, 'I wish we knew each other. I feel drawn towards you.'

One such glance suffices to set the man's heart and head aflame, and at the close of the performance behold him on the grand staircase waiting to see his charmer come out. But she is a practised Flirt, who has only amused herself by trying the killing-power of her eyes ; just as a man, when going out to shoot, may prove his double-barrel by knocking a miserable sparrow off a branch, so, with the coldest of unconscious stares, she sweeps by, leaving the presumptuous wight dumbfounded. He slinks off with a lagging step, out of conceit with himself, red to his ear-tips, and full of bile. It may be years before he recovers from this humiliation ; and forget it he never will, if he lives to a hundred. There are some men who have carried the deep scar of one false glance all through their lives.



III.

THE FLIRT IN THE SEASON.

WE prefer the Flirt with a purpose, who does not waste her powder upon sparrows, but finds a suitable object for every eye-shot. As we have said, there are innocent Flirts and guilty ones, and both can be seen during the London season flourishing in great numbers in all the resorts of festivity. The innocent Flirt, who comes out under a chaperon to hunt for a husband, begins operations bashfully. She is taken to be presented at one of the Drawing-rooms; and if it be a novel delight, it is also a trying one to find herself driving down St. James's-street with bare shoulders in broad daylight. She sports a train three yards long, and a pearl necklace. On descending from their carriage in the palace-yard, she and her chaperon are surrounded by young men in showy uniforms, military, naval, and diplomatic, who bustle to offer their arms and murmur compliments. She is introduced to a youth in blue swallowtail and kerseymere breeches—an *attaché* home on leave—who begs to act as escort, and pilot her through the crowded rooms, whilst a handsome young giant in the scarlet-and-gold of the dragoons does the same duty for the chaperon.

The press is so great and the scene so imposing that the bashful girl is glad to accept the arm of the sucking-diplomatist, who whispers to her the names of all the great people whom they jostle. Here a past premier with his star and garter; there a duchess and her daughter; there an archbishop and his wife; droves of admirals pushing nieces before them; and troops of generals doing their best for flocks of damsels who were the belles of garrison-towns. What a sight for a girl who has but just left the schoolroom, and who, not a year before, received her last whipping from a martinet governess!

The ceremony of curtsying to the Sovereign or the Princess cheek-by-jowl with the greatest personages in the land endows a girl with an assurance which never forsakes her afterwards. She

THE FLIRT PRESENTED AT COURT.





perceives that the great are not so very formidable after all, and that good looks can hold their own even at Court. From the circle of princes and ministers grouped around the Throne, more than one admiring glance falls on her; and the Royal page who gathers up her train and chucks it over her arm as she retires from Royalty's presence does this more civilly than to titled dowagers with diamonds in their hair. Trust a girl, even a country-bred one, for noticing how many other girls, prettier than herself, there may be at one of these Drawing-rooms. The polite *attaché*, who joins her again after she has issued from the throne-room, mutters something nice about the grace with which she bears herself. He thinks her dress lovely, its train unique, and so forth.

The girl smiles; she only believes half these compliments (for she has had a first experience of flattery from country cousins at home), and yet she notices that guardsmen make way respectfully to let her pass; that grizzled veterans, whose breasts are covered with medals, nudge each other at her approach; and that sundry old ladies, with mortally plain daughters, eye her with that stony stare which, when it is levelled by woman at woman, is as good as purest incense. So, although her Majesty provides not so much as a cup of tea for the refreshment of her loyal subjects, who tire themselves in standing for hours in her saloons and other hours on the staircase waiting for their carriages, our incipient Flirt does not mind the fatigue. Her hair has got rumpled; her dress, disarranged in the crush, has lost half a yard of trimming; and one of her satin shoes is slipping off; but the *attaché* sticks close to her, saying pleasant things, and the dragoon behind adds his word of testimony to the effect which her charms have produced. So this is to her a day of nectar-drinking. She has been presented at Court; she has had a success; and for that moment at least the world seems to be lying at her feet like a ball.

In a few days more she is in the very midst of the eddy of fashionable life. She returns from balls at six in the morning, and does not leave her bed till midday. She has no sooner breakfasted than she must put on her habit for a ride in Rotten Row, where she wondrously soon gets to know the faces of the *habitués*, many of whom bow to her, whilst others wheel their nags round and canter by her side, asking her to promise them waltzes for the next dance at Lady A.'s or the Duchess of B.'s. At two she is home again, and dressing for an afternoon outing. One day there is a



flower-show at the Botanical Gardens ; on another a fancy bazaar ; on another some pigeon-shooting at Hurlingham. On Sundays there is the Zoo, varied by an occasional drive to Richmond, or a dinner at the Trafalgar at Greenwich.

At all these places the Flirt finds opportunities for airing her attractions, and practising those wiles which a girl learns as quickly as a kitten learns to frisk. She is noted for a beauty ; her chaperon commends her for a sweet temper, enlarges on her talent as a pianist, and hints at 'expectations.' Matrimonial candidates are

THE FLIRT IN ROTTEN ROW.



not wanting, and it become the Flirt's care to select the fittest. If she be a clever girl, she does this without offending anybody, and keeps the whole squad of her suitors still expectant up to the last moment, when, having booked an eligible offer, she can safely relapse into the chaste reserve of brides-elect.

The talent which some maidens show in thus playing off rival admirers against one another is something to see. If the heart



does not get foolishly caught in the snares of some 'detrimental,' the mind remains free to work out the problem of how to secure wealth and social position without too much self-sacrifice. A girl who may not be intent on marrying for love is yet anxious that her husband shall be kind; and the secret of so many oddly-matched weddings between brides in their teens and grizzly men past middle age is, that a girl often discovers that she has more chance of being tenderly treated by an old man than by a young one. Anyhow,

she watches very keenly to see if the wooers who flit around her show signs of temper, stinginess, or jealousy.

She would not have much chance of enlightening herself on these points if her flirtations were confined to the morning rides or afternoon recreations above mentioned; but Ascot and Goodwood, the Eton and Harrow Match at Lord's, the *parties fines* at the Orleans Club, and the cotillons at balls enable her to study men for hours at a time, and to take her mental notes as to character. A man may conceal his defects during the afternoon; but it is rare when he does not let something of them peep out in the course of a day's excitement about horse-racing, or during a long cotillon, when he is made to go through figures in which he is converted into a laughing-stock, and must show how he can stand banter.

During Ascot week, for instance, the chaperon possibly hires a lodge near the course, goes to witness the four days' racing, and gives little dinners every evening to pleasant acquaintances whom she has met in the Grand Stand. Some of these inveigle the Flirt



into betting. It used to be the custom for girls to bet gloves (when they did bet), but this has grown tame, and a girl now wagers hard money, or 'discretions'—which mean jewellery or a private settlement of a long milliner's bill. However, a Flirt would do well to be careful about indulging in this form of dissipation, for men do not really like a betting-girl. Many a smart miss has thrown a good matrimonial chance away by unguardedly taking a bet which had been offered to prove her. Again, 'discretions' are awkward things, for, if a girl loses, the gallant gamester is apt to demand a settlement in the shape of a kiss, and to snatch it in a quiet corner, if voluntary payment be refused.

The Ascot week, however, is sure to bring instructive lessons. It is then that the Flirt sees how ill the sportive young baronet bears his losses on the turf, while the middle-aged merchant, who has, perhaps, lost three times as much, remains as serene as ever. The one stands revealed as a cantankerous cub, the other as a man of nerve and good taste. Race succeeds race, and the differences become more accentuated. In the evening, at dinner, the baronet is absent-minded and sour, talks of the villany of book-makers, and swears that his favourite was 'roped;' the merchant overflows with anecdote, and proves that his appetite has not been impaired a jot.

The next day, at luncheon, on the top of a drag which has been tooled down from London by some noble member of the Four-in-hand Club, the young baronet drinks too much champagne, and his hand trembles as he holds up his field-glass to watch the start in a race on which he has risked a pot of money; the elderly merchant meanwhile devotes himself to the Flirt, and shows by his light chatting that he has an eye for something beyond the pecuniary aspects of a race. He points out the beauties of the course, the multicoloured line of jockeys breaking up for a preliminary canter, the picturesque effect of the mass of carriages thronging near the stand. Nor does he forget to make an appointment to meet his fair companion again at Goodwood, nor to mutter a few words about the attractions of his own country estate, which he has just begun to plant with trees. There is no flattery like that of paying assiduous attention to a woman in despite of surrounding excitements; and at this game elderly men much excel young ones.

But the young ones come to the front again in ballrooms, and especially in cotillions. Of late years it has become the fashion to give calico-balls for the encouragement of native industry; so our



Flirt is sure to appear once or more in the course of the season at one of these charitable hops, tricked out in some cheap stuff at fivepence a yard. A white calico dress looped with bunches of scarlet tape, a red rose in her hair, and another at her girdle—this is her costume, and she contrives to create as much effect in it as if it had come from Worth's, in Paris. Your true Flirt always likes dancing, and seems never to tire. Her card is filled up within a few minutes of her entry into the ballroom, with the exception of the one or two dances which she reserves *in petto* for favourites; and she gaily trips through every valse and quadrille.

Middle-aged admirers are fain to play the wall-flower, and look on glumly during these untiring performances, which indicate a strength of muscle and a dashing disposition of mind not to be competed with by any man who has reached his fortieth year. The most prudent fogeys do not attempt to join in the dancing, sensibly



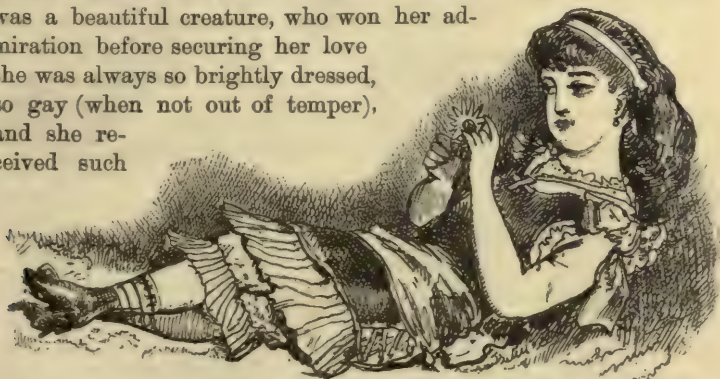
recognising that those who take part in cotillions are apt to make exhibitions of themselves. A portly quadragenarian trotting over a polished floor with a grotesque pasteboard head on his shoulders, or a bunch of canvas carrots in his mouth (for the humours of these cotillon figures are various), has often forced a Flirt to stuff her handkerchief between her lips. However, there is a cotillon figure where the ladies invite the gentlemen to dance; and here the Flirt may soothe an elderly lover's feelings by preferring him before younger men; or, again, she may gladden him by selecting his youngest and best-looking rival as the butt for all her malice, forcing him to sport the ass's head or the carrots, to gallop round the room on all-fours, and so forth. This can be done with the greater safety, as a young man is never displeased at being made to cut antics in cotillions.



IV.

THE FLIRT FROM EXAMPLE AND PRECEPT.

FANNY is the Flirt-daughter of a Flirt-mother, who never had a chance of becoming anything else but a thorn to the other sex. Her parents were separated by mutual consent when she was about six years old, and she was taken to live with the one whom she knew and liked the least. But her mother was a beautiful creature, who won her admiration before securing her love she was always so brightly dressed, so gay (when not out of temper), and she received such



a number of well-dressed men in her drawing-rooms! Few ladies came; and little Fanny grew up to prefer gentlemen, because they took her on their knees and gave her bonbons. Her mother's fits of temper were like rapid alternations of cloud or sunshine. If things went wrong—if there were creditors or such-like annoyances—Fanny got slapped for nothing, and would run howling to the kitchen, to take comfort of the maid, a middle-aged sharp-eyed Frenchwoman, who was paid with mamma's cast-off dresses, and with vails from visitors.

Fanny received no education to speak of; for her mother, who wanted her to play Propriety in the drawing-room when she received visitors, or in the carriage when she drove in the Park, could not think of sending her to school. Sometimes a governess came to give her lessons; but governesses and mamma had a trick

of quarrelling, chiefly about Fanny's backwardness and the impossibility of making her learn anything so long as her mother encouraged her in idleness and saucy ways. When mamma was in a good-humour she would have Fanny brought into her dressing-



room, and spent hours in covering her with finery, combing her hair, and washing her hands in milk of almonds to make them white. She said that the wild little mite had the same blue eyes as herself; and she took pleasure in hearing gentlemen say that she would grow up as pretty as a fairy.

The time came, however, when Fanny was called up less and less often into the presence of visitors. This was when she had reached her tenth year, and began to look too much of a hoyden for a mother who wished to appear perennially twenty-five. As a consequence, she took to living a great deal with the servants in the kitchen. They employed her to fetch and carry, and opened her small mind wonderfully with their tattle. She could hardly read large print, but was aware that the potman courted Sue the housemaid, and that when a certain policeman looked over the area-railings, softly whistling, he was after Meg the cook. Then she learned what duns meant, and saw many of them parleying with Jack the page-boy, a precocious imp, who treated her on terms of easy familiarity, and got her to steal pomatum and scented soaps for him out of her mother's dressing-room. By-and-by this lad informed her that 'missus' was going to 'old Gooseberry,' which he explained to mean 'blue smash,' or anything else that signified bankruptcy.

The servants did not receive their wages regularly, and set meals were no longer the rule in the dining-room. Fanny therefore ate with the servants, while her mother took breakfast in bed and generally dined out. Sometimes mamma would vanish for six weeks together to Paris or the seaside, and on her return rate Fanny sharply for looking such a slut. The truth is, Fanny enjoyed her mother's absences; for they allowed her to go gadding about with the servants, who took her to Rosherville, and wound up the excursion with a happy evening at some music-hall, where she and the precocious page drank negus out of the same tumbler. This blissful life was abruptly interrupted when Fanny was fourteen. An execution was put into the house. Fanny's mother contrived to secrete her jewels, and went off to the Continent with them; and Fanny herself was sent to reside with a distant connection, a curate in Yorkshire.

It was three years before the mother and daughter met again, and by that time Fanny had learned to read, write, gabble French, and strum three tunes on the piano. The curate's wife imparted to

her such knowledge as she possessed; the curate teased her with moral lectures; but on the whole she rather enjoyed her life at the parsonage, where she had plenty of playfellows, and was held in some respect by reason of her London experiences. She became a



romp, and had the pleasure of seeing the curate's male progeny fight with their fists for the honour of dancing attendance on her. She was just sixteen when Tom, the eldest boy, who was fourteen and a half, proposed that they should elope together, and set up house with eleven and sixpence he had saved out of his pocket-money. She flew at rather higher game in accepting the advances of a country-town baker's heir, who paid his court by presenting her with small fruit-pies, which he made surreptitiously with his

father's flour. This flirtation was in a fair way towards driving the young baker to commit suicide in one of his own ovens, when Fanny was called away from the parsonage to join her mother, who had returned to London, and expressed her intention of bringing her daughter 'out.'

Fanny was rather sorry to leave the parsonage for the purpose of resuming what she remembered as a life of discomfort; but she found her mother much changed. By some arrangement with Fanny's father all debts had been paid, and the separated wife was to enjoy a handsome allowance payable monthly, but contingent on no further debts being contracted. Later on the daughter discovered that this arrangement had been effected by parentally defrauding her of some property to which she was entitled under her mother's marriage settlement. Anyhow, the maintenance allowed was sufficient to keep mother and child in decent state. They had a brougham, a footman, a well-furnished house in the West-end, and a margin to buy an occasional opera-box with. Fanny learned that she was to become her mother's bosom friend and companion, and do her best to catch a husband who should provide them both with a sumptuous establishment.

Fanny was exceedingly pretty, and her queer bringing-up had rendered her knowing as a young cat. She was not slow to discern that her respected mother was selfishness in petticoats, and only set store by her as a marketable commodity; nevertheless, she took a semi-contemptuous liking for the faded, light-headed, garrulous lady, who initiated her into the arts by which men may be cozened. Not that such arts really need teaching like an abstruse science, for women pick them up intuitively; yet young Flirts can always learn something from older ones, especially when these older ones know the fortune and parentage of every man in society.

Fanny went to balls; and her mother told her afterwards the exact worldly position of every partner with whom she had danced. She bade her beware of 2,000*l.* a year, which is but gilded misery; 5,000*l.* with landed property, said she, was too often comparative pauperism, for the land ate up most of the income; 10,000*l.* a year derivable from a bank or manufactory, and with an M.P. ship annexed, would do as a *pis-aller*; but it would be foolishness not to pitch one's ambition on the best things at once, and go in straight for a coronet and 50,000*l.* per annum. Such prizes, she told her, frequently fall to the lot of girls who have nothing but their good



looks to bring their husbands. Fanny, who began to think no small champagne of herself on finding her beauty attract general notice, laid the maternal maxims to heart, and trifled with a great number of suitors whom most other girls in her position would have been glad to catch. She did not flout them, but behaved worse—

leading each one on separately to hope, and hope till, finding a better match, she dropped him as unceremoniously as a withered flower.

During her first season she was all the rage. Afterwards at Spa, and during a round of visits in country houses, she kept eligible men round her in shoals ; but she was too giddy to see that such chances as she then had would never come again, and she became noted for an incorrigible Flirt before the novelty of dancing



upon men's hearts and vanities had in any way began to pall upon her. During her second season she was less in vogue than the first ; but setting it down for a dull season, she adjourned her hopes without losing any of her illusions. At her third season, however, her eyes opened somewhat, for she who had flirted with everybody began to be flirted with in her turn by men who made fun of her.

This is always a sign of decadency. Fanny's mother grew cross, and accused her of not knowing how to play her cards ; the girl retorted with vehement recriminations, and there were some fine

screaming scenes between the attached couple. On the whole, Fanny's mother did wrong to initiate quarrels, for she had everything to lose by wounding the girl's pride. Fanny took a brooding resolution, that when she married it should be for herself alone, and that she would never allow her mother to set foot within her house.

She insensibly lapsed into the second manner of Flirts, which is one of great softness. She saw that several men whom she had rejected had married, and were both prosperous and happy—which made her jealous and cautious, but not more easy to please; for looking at her marriage from a purely personal point of view, she was now unconsciously more fastidious than when she regarded it as a speculation in which her mother was to have a half-share. On the other hand, men, knowing her to be a Flirt, were not duped by her softened manner; and many held aloof who would have urged their suits if they could have believed she would have treated them *au sérieux*.

She was still so pretty as to seem a most desirable acquisition to men who count beauty for much in the choice of a wife; and she had a small tender spot in her heart—just enough to keep her romantic after many deceptions. So it befell that one bright day she began to take a serious interest in one of her love-affairs with a young gentleman of property. The wooer had good looks and good temper on his side; and she really liked him—so much so that her cheeks flamed and her pulses throbbed on several occasions when she thought a proposal was impending. But he heard of her reputation, turned shy, and suddenly jilted her—by which blow she was nearly driven out of her senses. For several days it seemed to her as if life had lost all its savour—all its prospects; then she rallied, and, becoming reckless from her humiliation, threw herself at the head of the first man who offered himself. This person chanced to be a middle-aged archæologist, who was as much embarrassed as flattered by the hazard which put him in possession of a young, brilliant, and very expensive wife, much too skittish for him to manage.

His archæological studies were not benefited in consequence. Flirts like Fanny do not make good wives. The girl had married more to spite her mother than to please herself; and once she had exhausted the pleasure of seeing her parent gnash her teeth, she found out that she had mated herself to a man by no means congenial to her tastes. The archæologist had married in order to

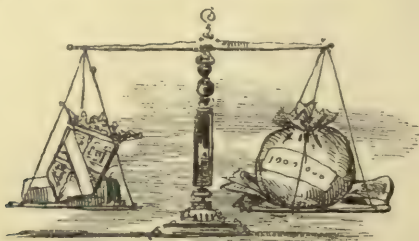
have a home ; Fanny wanted to enjoy her privileges as a matron by gadding about to amusements too costly for her husband's purse. In their early days of connubial bliss, when free from the rheumatic attacks to which a misplaced ardour on the subject of lake dwellings



had rendered him liable, her husband used to escort her on these occasions ; but he soon grew tired of his *rôle*. A demand for extra pin-money produced a coolness between the couple ; the first milliner's bill, about a yard in length, occasioned a decided breach.

Fanny's mother did not help to mend matters, for, being called in as an ally by her reconciled and repentant daughter, she went to work as mothers-in-law not unfrequently do, and entered her protest against the marital theories of economy. Then daily bickerings arose, stinging speeches and mutual recriminations; all of which ended at last by the archæologist making a cheerful surrender of half his income for the sake of seeing his wife and her mother leave his house together.

Thereupon the husbandless pair of Flirts resumed their old life in company. It was not a joyous life. For the young wife especially it became a weary round of dissipations, which, being now aimless, was bereft of all zest. She could not marry again whilst her husband was alive, and the continuance of her alimony depended on her not breaking any of the commandments that concern marriage. On the whole, Fanny learned, rather too late, that flirting is a wind which seldom blows light craft on a prosperous voyage.



V.

THE FLIRT WHO HAS PLAIN SISTERS.

IN the catalogue of Flirts this variety has many representatives. England is a country of large families; all the girls in a family cannot be pretty, and it will often happen that amongst half a dozen sisters, one only has any pretensions to comeliness. This one is called 'the Beauty,' and she becomes in a household what the 'favourite' is in a racing-stable. All the family hopes are centred upon her, and she is expected to win good matrimonial stakes for herself, that she may provide well for her sisters afterwards.



Her sisters do not much like her as a rule—how should they? She eclipses them whenever they appear together: she is a butterfly, and they so many grey moths. Nevertheless Beauty is not treated in the Cinderella fashion, for that is a style which has grown antiquated. Nowadays Cinderella's ugly sisters would have calculated the advantages of possessing a relative who could bring them to great honour, and comfort them on every side.

Besides, Beauty often has a mother who keeps the ugly sisters in subjection. Appraising with maternal shrewdness the perfections

of the one child who is the living image of what she herself was, or thinks herself to have been, the judicious parent gives out that Beauty is delicate, and requires special petting—that she is also a very sensitive child, and must not be teased. With more or less good grace, the sisters submit to see Beauty lie in bed longer than they, wear prettier dresses, and drink a glass of port-wine every day at luncheon. Jealousy goads them to snub the favoured one now and then with tart speeches, or to pinch her slyly in corners and plead provocation—which does not save them from correction at the maternal tongue or hands.

It is more pleasing to reflect that in frequent cases the ugly sisters join quite as cordially as their mother in the recognition of Beauty's queenship. If they be a well-taught good-natured family in straitened circumstances—say, the daughters of a country clergyman—it becomes evident to them that they cannot all go up to



London to enjoy themselves at balls and flower-show; so they get to feel a sort of pride in the sister who is to wear the family colours, and, whilst enjoying her winsome face, wish it luck for their own sakes. These are beauties who have been passionately loved and admired by their ill-favoured kin.

In any case, Beauty is sure to be spoiled by the family acknowledgment of her charms; and by the time she is consigned to the London aunt or godmother who has undertaken to bring her out, she has formed rather rosy anticipations of the triumphs that await her. Nobody has exactly told her that she has been sent to London to catch a husband; but she understands what hopes have been placed upon her, and feels that she is not intended to return home unengaged. However, her first parties in town cause her a sharp disappointment. She passes unnoticed among the crowd of other beauties; she is jostled on staircases; her chaperon has actually to finesse in order to find her partners; and these, far from being overwhelmed by her charms, treat her with remarkable composure, and talk a drawling *persiflage* which she does not understand.

All this is very different from what Beauty had expected, on the faith of a society experience derived from three-volume novels. She had pictured well-dressed men of title and fortune thronging round her in circles five deep; and a particular one, dark, very tall, calm, muscular, sardonic towards men and gentle as a lamb towards herself, who should do violent things in her honour, and eventually win her hand by cowing all his rivals like a very lion-tamer. A country Flirt has always to unlearn a great deal when she comes up to town; and the intermediary period between the discarding of old ideas and the acquisition of new puts her in much the same shivering plight as moulting birds, when their worn feathers have gone and the fresh brilliant plumage is growing. This morally denuded plight is also one full of peril.

Beauty may let herself be caught unawares by a sapient fowler, whose snares were too cunning to be suspected. Feeling that even the smooth places of society are strange to her tread, how can she guess its pitfalls? The jargon of ballrooms; the indifference which everybody seems to express towards everything; the competition with other beauties whom she sees to be prettier, sprightlier, gayer than herself; and, above all, the bewildering whirl of new faces: these things abash her. It appears to her as though she never met the same persons twice. Every day brings fresh introductions; so that a partner whom she chances to encounter at three different houses in the course of a fortnight gladdens her like an old friend. This partner is a fowler, and in Beauty's artless welcome of him lies his chance.

But the chaperon is watchful. Beauty is warned that the partner is a Detrimental, and so learns her first lesson of the dangers of town. If she escapes the danger by treating Detrimental guardedly on the fourth occasion of their meeting, she is in a manner seasoned, and walks thenceforth with a securer foot.

Then comes her bright time, when she discovers that the position of a belle during the London season is not quite what she had dreamed. It is nevertheless a pleasant position after all. Her aunt need take no trouble now to find partners for her. The circle of her acquaintance gradually expands, till it includes nearly a couple of hundred unmarried men, whose names she cannot remember, and of whom she knows nothing more than what they have told her about themselves between the figures in a quadrille or during the panting halts of a waltz. Not having memory enough to recollect all these physiognomies, she is often surprised when a man whom she had taken for a stranger comes up and asks her to dance, on the strength of an introduction at a previous ball. Some partners—officers, government clerks, or young barristers—have the polite effrontery to tell her, in so many words, that she is an uncommonly pretty girl. The first time she turns scarlet; but perceiving her complimenter whisper, a few minutes afterwards, in the ear of another pretty girl, who merely giggles, she takes such free-and-easy banter for what it is worth, and learns to be surprised at nothing.

Meanwhile, from out of the two hundred men who have been presented to her, a dozen or so, who habitually move within her aunt's 'set,' turn up more often than others; and among these, again, some half dozen are pronounced by her aunt to be 'very nice,' which, in her phraseology, means 'eligible.' London lives much in sets, and Beauty has to cure herself of the delusion that her range of choice is unlimited. Towards the end of the season she gets somehow to see that she may really have the pick of three out of the eligible six, and that the result of three months' dancing, dressing, and sight-seeing, is that she must choose at short notice whether she will marry a junior partner in an indigo firm, a solicitor of forty in rising practice, or a shy squire of thirty, who looks down at the carpet and traces patterns on it with the point of his boot while he is speaking to her.

Good-bye to visions of dashing earls with commissions in the Guards, to tall dark muscular men with lamb-like manners, and to all the big prizes in the marriage lottery! The plain fact has to be

faced—that Beauty's aunt cannot afford to take charge of her for a second season; and that the girl must make her selection and seal her fate before society 'goes out of town;' failing which she will have to return home and shift for herself as she can amongst those ugly sisters of hers.

It is really a very trying moment, and it seems to the girl as though events had rolled with such steam-like rapidity that the end of the season has come before she has had time to look about her. Nobody has won her heart, and it does not strike her that either of the three gentlemen above mentioned evinces the signs of a violent passion towards herself. Her aunts hints that the rising solicitor is an admirable man, so prudent, wise, and well-to-do; but Beauty prefers the shy squire, because he seems kind and manageable, which the solicitor does not. The lawyer soon perceives this, and, having no time to waste, retires from the contest in a huff, which



so piques the aunt that she reads Beauty a sharp lesson upon giddiness; whereon Beauty, feeling miserable, vents her wretchedness by a fit of sulking towards the squire, who, taking fright after one particularly depressing *tête-à-tête*, retires also.

These calamities leave only the indigo partner in the field; but Beauty cannot rally in time to snatch at this man without knowing anything of his character, as she says. He seems pert and perky; he talks of everything with disparagement; and Beauty does not think she could be happy with him, at least not till she has had time to study him a little more. So at a final garden-party she neglects to give him the necessary amount of encouragement; the next day he leaves a *p.p.c.* card; and the aunt informs Beauty, with a mixture of anger and pity, that the season is over now, and her chance at an end. 'I've done my best for you, my dear; but girls nowadays are not what they were in my time. *We* always knew when to be serious. *We* were aware that men can't be trifled with, for pretty faces are as plentiful as blackberries; and it is quite a mistake for a girl to suppose that if she flirts with a man, he can't go away and find just as good as herself anywhere.'

Beauty is surprised to hear that she has been flirting. It appears to her as though the swift round of society amusements had left her no leisure to do anything half so deliberate. She goes home disconsolate enough; and perhaps two years later, after having in the meantime eked out the weariest of existences with her ugly sisters, she marries a farmer or a curate. But to the end of her life the recollection of her one London season lingers in her mind as a phantasmagoria, a whirligig, a dervish dance, and she decides that she did not get fair play in being blamed for not having chosen a husband in the so rare intervals of thought that were left her between one pleasure and another. Country beauties cling a long time to the fallacy that husband-choosing is a matter for reflection, wherein they differ from their town sisters.



BEAUTY'S SINGLE LONDON SEASON.

"The aunt informs Beauty that the season is over and her chance at an end."

VI.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL FLIRT.

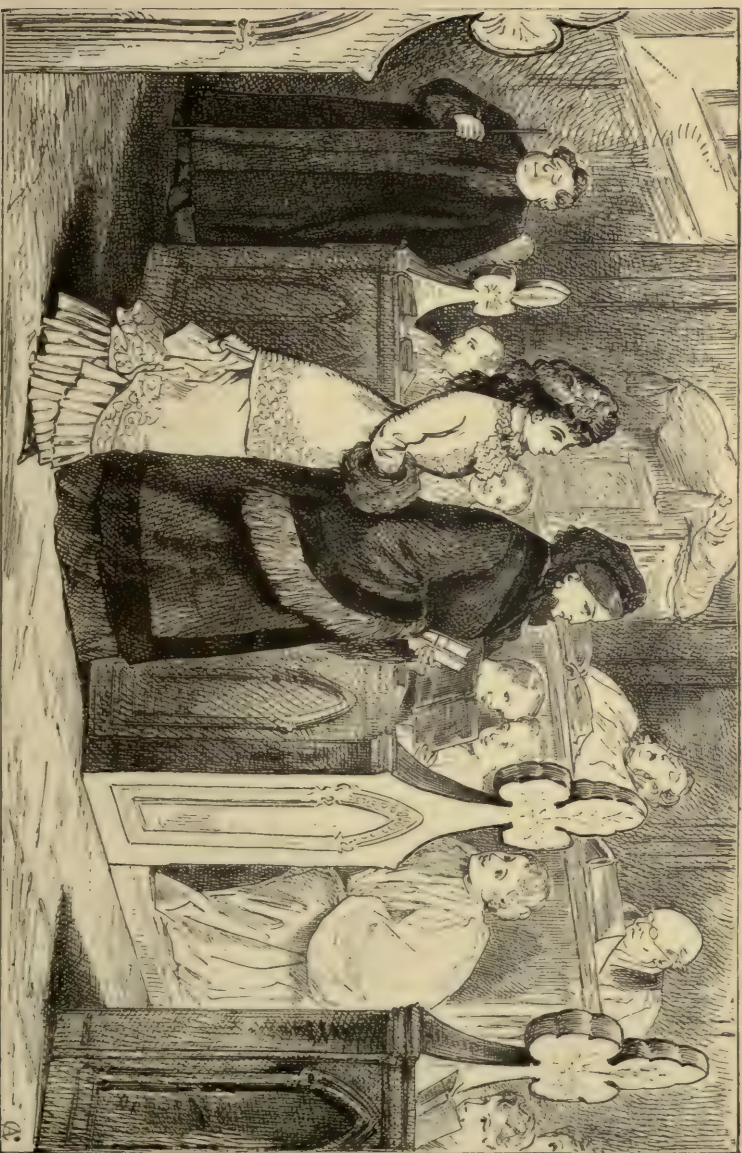
THE desire of bishops to promote their sons-in-law has long been notorious and praiseworthy. A bishop may educate his son and leave his promotion to others, for too many dignitaries of the bishop's own surname, holding his appointments, would cause a scandal; but a son-in-law bears a different family name, so his advancement is a much easier matter. For this reason the clerical candidates for the hand of a right reverend lord's daughter are always numerous and eager.

It does not follow that a bishop's daughter always cares to marry a clergyman. Bishops are of many sorts—the wordly-minded, the scholarly, the pious, and the ascetical. The two first categories generally take their families to town during the parliamentary session; the last two leave them in their dioceses and go to London alone, lodging *en garçon* under the hospitable roof of Lambeth Palace, where three sets of rooms are reserved in Lollard's Tower for prelates in their case. Now a girl whose episcopal father belongs to a noble family, and obtained his mitre solely owing to his connections, is rather disposed to wed a landowner or a soldier than a priest; again, the daughter of an ex-college don or public school head-master has hankerings after a life different from that which she has led among cloisters or collegiate closes. Her father's promotion is sure to have elated her ambition a little. She thinks a man is seen at his best in a scarlet coat. She wonders what a military messroom can be like. She has read in novels that officers are gallant cheerful fellows, who make their spouses lead merry lives; and all that she has seen of them herself—their startling clothes when out of uniform, their moustaches and eyeglasses, nay, the odour of the choice cigars they smoke—has a tantalising effect upon her senses. There were no cigars smoked in her father's household, and she had indeed learned to connect the use of tobacco with a precocious depravity of morals; for her right reverend parent, when he was head-master of Whippingham Grammar School, used to birch, with merciless severity, boys who were caught polluting themselves with smoke in secret corners.

The don-bishop's daughter, if she be pretty, seldom abandons herself to excessive devotion. Her father (whom much scholarship has converted at heart into a semi-pagan) rather discourages that kind of thing, as tending to trouble and social indignity. Whilst he was a schoolmaster he inculcated attendance at chapel as a duty; likewise the reading of pious books on Sundays, because they conduced to learning as well as edification. Religion and lessons were so inseparably connected in the girl's mind that the mere sight of a 'Paley' or 'Butler' recalled tedious Sunday tasks; while the reading of a collect in church stirred memories of bygone Sabbaths, when these pithy prayers had to be learned by rote and recited to a governess before breakfast under pain of bad marks.

A don's daughter (if pretty as above said) is seldom a lover of books, pedagogic ways, or academical or ecclesiastical architecture. A tender remembrance and liking for these things may come back to her in after-life, when she has long lived apart from them; but while growing in her teens she can imagine nothing more dull than to vegetate all one's days in an atmosphere of ink and schoolroom stuffiness. She envies the boys or undergraduates when they go away for the vacations; and if she can get acquainted with some of them whom her parents occasionally invite to tea, she prefers the society of those who can talk with her about scenes having nothing to do with rectories or scholastic institutions. She looks down upon clergymen's sons; and herein takes after her parents, who show much more favour to the boys whose fathers own broad acres or prosperous banks.

The compensation which a don's daughter obtains for her otherwise tiring life is the having plenty of young male eyes to admire her. She gets her first schooling in vanity from marking how the fifth-form boys stare at her and nudge each other as she walks into chapel with her mother. If her beauty have shone forth very early, doubtless one of the young cubs, bolder than the rest, takes to ogling her, and finds an opportunity for sending her some anonymous doggerel. He also shows off his prowess for her in the cricket-field or on the river, getting bowled out by a full-pitch or catching crabs in the gallant attempt to overdo himself. These things may cause the don's daughter to smile, but they afford her early practice in flirting; so that by-and-by, when her father is promoted to the pomp of lawn-sleeves, she is ready to try her proficiency in the wider arena of fashionable life. Hazard, which plays many pranks,



THE ECCLESIASTICAL FLIRT.

"The fifth-form boys stare at her and nudge each other as she walks into chapel with her mother."



may not unlikely throw in her way the identical young gentleman who made such good use of his bat in her honour; and if he turn out to have property or prospects, and to be as pleasant and enterprising as in his days of puppyhood, missy may possibly close her career as a Flirt by taking him for better or worse. Pedagogue bishops often catch as sons-in-law adults whom they have whipped in youth, and would sometimes like to whip again.

Matters are different with the daughters of bishops of the pious or ascetic sort. By these are meant prelates of rigidly Low-Church views or highly developed Ritualists, but in both cases earnestly religious bishops, not pedagogues or men of the world. Such men have usually been rectors of large parishes, or preaching canons noted for controversy. Their zeal has spread to their families. Wife, sons, daughters, have all enrolled themselves under the banner of the Church Militant; and the daughters especially desire nothing better than to continue in ecclesiastical harness all their lives, by being paired off with clergymen of congenial zeal, snugly beneficed.

Clerical fervour is so apt to impart primness to young ladies, that the daughter of a religious bishop is generally a demure puss, of starched ways and great inner slyness. She wears her hair smoothed down in bands, affects black dresses with plain collars and cuffs, and descants gravely upon the sin of worldliness to her class at the Sunday-school. For all this she has a knowledge of the temptations of the flesh and the ways of the devil, such as is not to be matched by any individual amongst her father's clergy; whilst on points of doctrine she could out-argue a refractory archdeacon. Her mode of flirting consists in propounding to young clergymen questions to test their orthodoxy; and the compliments she best relishes are those implied in an unreserved surrender to the law, which she lays down with far greater promptitude and decision than the Court of Arches. If her proclivities be towards High Church, she adorns her album with photographs of Messrs. Mackonochie, Purchas, Bennett, and Tooth, and can recapitulate volubly, in tones of muffled indignation, all the counts upon which these just men were unjustly condemned at law. If she be of Evangelical bias, she deplores the relapses towards the errors of Rome, and cherishes a scheme for bringing Baptists, Shakers, Quakers, and Jumpers all within the Anglican communion.

To do this sort of ecclesiastical maiden justice, she seldom dallies



long with the divine whom she makes up her mind to choose ; and what is more, she is very prone to select a curate who has little else but the clothes in which he stands, superadded to the physical or moral qualities which have rendered him lovable. There is in this much calculation, mixed up with love and a modicum of Christian charity, for Miss Prim knows the advantage of becoming wife to a friendless divine, who has no power of himself to help himself. She is far too shining a light to be hidden under a marital bushel. She must be mistress not only in her new home—which is her incontestable right—but in her future husband's parish, which might

not seem so much a matter of right if the said husband derived that parish from other hands than hers. Trust her for taking care that her bridegroom gets the fattest benefice in her father's gift at the time of her engagement, with a promise of transfer to other and



fatter ones as fast as they become vacant; and depend upon it, she feels no manner of scruple for the unstinted use which she makes of my lord's patronage on behalf of the consort whom she is pleased to regard as a 'chosen vessel.'

Unfortunately bishops are not lords temporal but lords temporary, and the good things which they can dispense when alive are not to be bequeathed at their deaths. Prelates' daughters have sometimes found that this drawback operates very much to their eventual humiliation and misery. Clerical husbands who have been uxorially driven by wives who wielded their fathers' croziers, so to say, have been known to jib—nay, to kick out—when their right reverend fathers-in-law had been laid in the cathedral vaults, where no more loaves and fishes could be got out of them. But such cases are really so painful that one had better not pursue the matter further.

We come now to the Ecclesiastical Flirt who is the daughter of a plain parson, never destined to attain episcopal honours. The position of girls whose fathers are clergymen in straitened circumstances has at all times been difficult, for the children of a gentleman aspire to marry persons of gentle rank, whereof the supply is not always equal to the demand in lonely parishes. Doubtless, when it comes to the hard pass of marrying a tradesman or remaining single, the country clergyman's daughter generally decides not to bide a virgin; but years must have ripened her face and judgment pretty considerably before she acknowledges that she is reduced to the stiff alternative. Commonly her early prime is wasted in the waiting for the wooer of suitable fortune and station whom she imagines to be always coming, and who so seldom does come. Thus it is that the country parson's daughter flirts with every eligible man within reach.

She has the curate (it was she who first discovered that dear papa wanted some assistance); she has the parish doctor, whom she makes every excuse for consulting, not on her own behalf, for her plan is to be always counted as healthy, but on account of dear papa or of some pet parishioners; and again, the parish doctor's assistant, or his medical friend, the young Sawbones fresh from Guy's, who comes and stays with him for a week. Then the squire's son takes lessons from the rector at uncertain intervals, and calls frequently with trout or hothouse flowers, for which the rector's daughter thanks him gushingly; and with so much ecstatic phrasing on her love for flowers, that the young hobbledehoy ends by wishing he had let the flowers be.

It is upon the bachelor vicar of the neighbourhood that the rectory Flirt has all the while set her heart. She delicately hints he must feel very strange, all alone in that queer old house. Asks



who helps him in visiting the women? Who looks to the efficiency of the schoolmistress? Is he not afraid of getting into eccentric bachelor habits, like dear old Mr. A., who is never fully dressed till

2 P.M. ; or that good Mr. B., who has not dined out for seven years, except on Easter Monday ? If he should be ill, will he be sure and let her know ? She can nurse ; she nursed poor aunt Jane in her last illness.



The unmarried vicar listens to all this half-sheepishly, but he has to hear a good deal more. He is really a fish so well worth netting that his colleague's gushing child leaves him no peace. Her father, she says, is the last of the old yeomen ; her great-grandfather was knighted ; her mother is the daughter of a rural dean. She—the gushing child—wants occupation. She cleans the church,

and decorates it at Christmas and Easter. She will decorate his if he likes. She always reads the *Parish Magazine*, the *Penny Post*, and the *Record* (or *Church Times*, as the case may be). Will he help her to keep up her French? Might she offer to teach him music? Mamma cannot go out much; will he take their house on his rounds? He will always find some one at home (a slight simper and twinkle in the eye give emphasis to the words 'some one'), and she will be so happy if he will come more often and take a quiet cup of tea!

Here the child becomes pensive, and strikes a pathetic vein. She has had some thoughts, she says, of becoming a 'sister.' Does her friend advise her to take that course? She feels so lonely sometimes, having no one to care for, and be understood by, that she thinks it would be a relief to her to don the nun's habit and spend her life in doing good. He must not talk of leaving the parish—what would the poor do without him? Of course he has enemies, every truly good man has; but some of whom he little dreams are taking his part in everything. She could not bear to think that if he went away she should never see him again.

There is something wondrous pitiful in these struggles which the smaller sort of Ecclesiastical Flirt has to make in the hunt after a husband and an establishment; and it is dismal to relate that so much finessing is mostly wasted. Bachelor vicars have a partiality for brides who can bring them a little money, and who, besides, entertain towards the clergy that soothing reverence which is not often felt by parsons' daughters who have lived among 'the cloth' all their lives. However, a man who marries a parson's daughter seldom makes a very bad bargain. These young ladies turn out better than their brothers are proverbially supposed to do, although it certainly is a fact that if a parson's daughter, through disappointment in legitimate flirting, branches off on the down-road to the pit of destruction, she mostly takes a clean header off the brink, and goes to the very bottom of that pit at one jump.

VII.

REGIMENTAL FLIRTS ON HOME SERVICE.

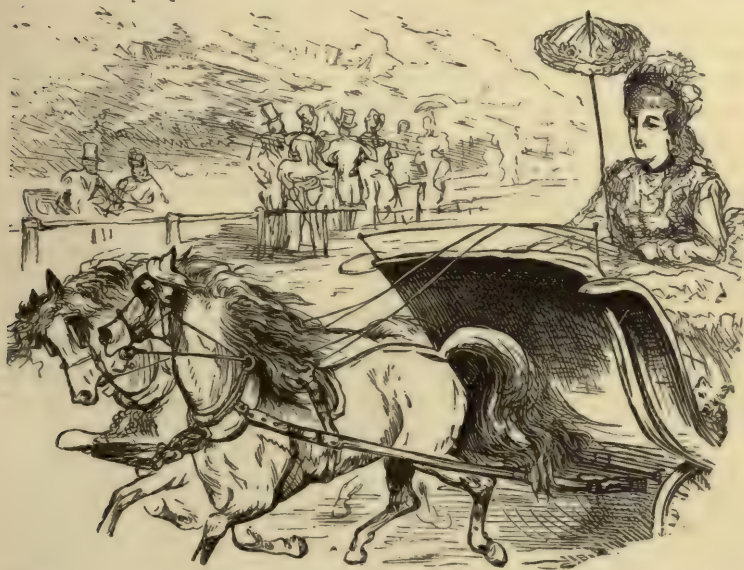
THE 'garrison hack,' as she is more humorously than respectfully called, has been the heroine of a hundred novels; and she is a type true to every country that boasts an army—save Turkey, perhaps, where women are kept locked up.

The British army differs from others, however, in being largely officered with rich men, and so the daughters of its colonels and



majors have finer opportunities than their sisters in other lands. In France, officers are so notoriously poor that a War-Office regulation obliges a lieutenant to sign a declaration on his word of honour that the young lady whom he wishes to marry has a dower of at least 1,000*l*. The dower for captains is 1,600*l*., and so on; and yet it seems that numerous French officers marry on no more than the regulation dower, and contrive to rub along somehow not unpleasantly. In England, marriage is often a saving to an officer,

inasmuch as it withdraws him from mess. If a linesman have 500*l.* a year of his own besides his pay, he will generally find it cheaper to set up a house with a sensible little woman than to run up bills for expensive dinners, and squander his substance in cards, bets, and billiards. But needs must that a man should be in the infantry to find marriage a paying business; for the sensible little woman who weds a cavalry officer thinks herself bound to keep up a certain state, and she will ride, because her husband does. Two chargers for the captain, a hack for the little woman, a pony-carriage,



grooms, and all the rest of it, mean 1,500*l.* at once, putting things at the lowest figure; so if a hussar or dragoon cannot command that much, matrimony in his case is the preliminary to sending in his papers.

This being so, there is a marked difference between the cavalry and the infantry Flirt. The former stands several pegs above the latter, and is altogether a gayer, bolder, and faster strategist. She has to manœuvre among richer men—some very rich—and she seldom pitches her ambition, to begin with, on anything lower than a landed estate and a town house. Her tone may be more or less

loud—that depends on the regiment with which she is connected—but she knows that the cavalry never go in for cheapness or humdrum amusements, and she mostly forces her own tastes somewhat in order to keep pace with the jolly companions from whose midst she hopes a husband will some day slip out.

Here it is worth remarking that girls seldom in their hearts enjoy fastness. That proverb about every woman being at heart a rake may be more or less true, but it means in any case that women like a little quiet rakiness indoors—not the boisterous recreations of the other sex. A girl often schools herself to an apparent passion for hard riding, stout, underdone meats, furious waltzing, lawn-tennis, and even shooting pheasants; but the pangless way in which she surrenders these pastimes after marriage proves how little she inwardly cared for them. Civilisation cannot obliterate nature nor wholly transform woman, who is a stay-at-home bird, into a scourer of hedgerows and fields. But girls take, by the instinct of vanity and of sexual attraction, to the occupations which are likely to bring them most into contact with men; and if they think that fastness pleases the males who surround them, they assume it so long as it serves their purpose.

In this they sometimes overshoot their mark. A fast man does not desire a fast wife; and officers, who may be thoughtless fellows in other respects, frequently calculate how far their incomes would stretch in the hands of a lively girl who looks upon coins as play-things for the game of ducks and drakes. There is no example of a colonel's daughter failing to obtain a husband if she be nice-looking, sweet-tempered, and modest. The very stillness of her life, contrasting with the riot in the midst of which 'plungers' breathe, is an allurements to wedded blessedness. How often, when racked by a headache consequent on mixed liquoring, a beardless officer curses the dull round of debauchery in which he revolves, like an ass turning a hydrant! He thinks it a beastly thing that he should get fuddled night after night; he recognises the vanity of 'Nap' and loo; he wonders how he can be such a dolt as to lay impossible wagers with Brown and Smith, and to back himself with the cue against 'Canon' Robinson. If out of the fumes of his late-hour drinkings there rises the face of the colonel's jolly little lass—a girl with no nonsense about her, straight and true as steel—the reflective sub is apt to grow maudlin. Inscrutable Fate oft-times uses a headache to open the understanding of the plunger, and a



THE GARRISON HACK.

"Jenny's prowess in the saddle."

night's debauch ushers in a morning of virtuous resolutions, ending in a proposal towards luncheon-time.

When at mess plungers speak civilly of a girl, or when they avoid mentioning her name at table, and only communicate their impressions about her in laudatory terms, whispered in the smoking-room or in private corners, then one may be sure that the girl is no talker of slang or taker of five-barred gates. She may be an arrant Flirt nevertheless, for her gentle modesty may be all makebelieve; but she will never be a garrison hack. Plungers are seldom deep enough to see through feminine hypocrisy, and accept a quiet girl's virtues at their apparent worth; but the term of 'hack' is labelled at once on the girl who is free with her smiles, even when she may be in reality much staidier of purpose than a more demure minx.

The garrison hack is a girl who has no mother, or whose mother is a weak and foolish person. She becomes fast through ignorance; and grows faster and faster because she mistakes the encouragement of her father's officers for genuine admiration. Her father may not know much about the management of girls, and lets her act as she pleases, without seeing any harm in it. He, too, mistakes the girl's popularity for a reputation of the proper sort. He is proud to hear men extol his 'Jenny's' prowess in the saddle; he boasts that he taught her early to like horses, and blurts out—good easy man—that he has no notion of a girl being a milksop. Maybe he frowns somewhat the first time he catches a word of downright stable lingo upon Jenny's lips; but when the novelty of the thing has worn off he pays no further heed, and gets an impression that girls always talked so and always will. After a while he grows so blind to his nice daughter's goings-on, that he is indignantly astonished and huffed when some elderly aunt or other matronly friend in petticoats thinks it her duty to hint that dear Jenny's conduct might give rise to misconstruction. 'Stuff and nonsense,' says he. 'I'd like to see the man who'd misconstruct—I'd have his ears off!'

A garrison hack's father has never a suspicion of the lengths to which she goes. What he sees is a trifle beside the reality, and what this reality is not a soul knows but the girl herself.

She is a Flirt who has thrown off the reserve of her sex, and a subtle deterioration of her moral sense eventually blunts her perception of right and wrong. It is not enough that she should

hunt, dance with twenty different partners at every ball, and encourage men to tell her queer messroom anecdotes, at which she giggles; besides all this, she tipples champagne till her cheeks turn quite pink and her eyes glisten; she lets her fingers be squeezed by her partners, and only makes a pretence of anger when some bold one kisses her in a corner. Where is the harm in kissing? She is not such a prude as to make a fuss about trifles. She thinks she can well defend herself, and so she does; until one day, her heart getting entangled within the wiles of an unusually good fellow, and champagne aiding, maybe, to throw her off her guard, her defences fail her at the wrong moment. Then consternation



follows, and for a week she sobs in private, dreaming of suicide and all sorts of other unfashionable things, including elopement with the seductive aggressor, and love in a cottage for ever afterwards.

But the aggressor always happens to be deep in his tradesmen's books, and unable to afford so much as the luxury of an elopement. He explains this very softly, and consoles the frail one, advising her not to redden her eyes like that, lest other fellows should notice it. Then philosophy ensues. The experienced maiden reflects that hidden faults are no faults, and that her aggressor is an honourable fellow who can keep a secret. He does keep it; and so do others subsequently, one after another, so fast as the careless Flirt treats them to fragments of her love. It is a maxim in such cases that what has been done once may be done again—that one may as well be hanged (if hanged at all) for twenty black sheep as for one white lamb: and the garrison hack's final consolation is that 'they all do it!'

It may seem to the innocent reader that a startling charge is conveyed in the foregoing paragraph; but it would be a much more startling thing if a girl could adopt the manners of wild boys, mix with them, drink with them, and retain her purity through it all. As well suppose that a full-blown rose could be tossed from hand to hand without losing some of its leaves. Novelists are bound to portray garrison hacks as virgins without spot, but garrison officers know that they are but flesh and blood, which are fragile things. A well-broken hack, however, does not come to lasting grief because she has had a fall or two: this again is one of your novelist's wilful delusions. She takes heart, on the contrary, struggles on, and is never so near to marriage as when her reputation for fastness is so well established that no one can find anything to say against her that has not been said before. A reaction then sets in, and a new set of officers coming to join the regiment, she has the advantage of playing upon chivalrous and unprejudiced young minds, who refuse to believe all that is whispered about 'so jolly a girl.' The newly-joined sub is often an unwary being, and the practised Flirt has little difficulty in alluring him to some pass where the paternal colonel is made to intervene, asking him if his intentions are honourable. There is always hope for a garrison Flirt so long as her father retains active command. Luck only begins to desert her when, papa being put upon half-pay, she retires to some watering-

place, and falls into the ranks of commonplace Flirts who, towards the period between five-and-twenty and thirty, fire their arrows at large against all mankind.

There is an old saw as to the kind of men who make the best husbands. It is equally applicable to women. The garrison hack always makes a good wife: tolerant, companionable, and an excellent adviser in difficulties. She has sown her wild-oats, but her husband is none the wiser, for they were sown in the dark.

VIII.

THE REGIMENTAL FLIRT ON FOREIGN SERVICE.

GIBRALTAR, Malta, Canada, and India are all capital places for garrison Flirts. They get a clear field in these localities, for the native ladies seldom match them, even when they try. Now, besides the cavalry Flirt already described, there is the infantry Flirt, who offers two or three varieties. First comes the girl who professes to live in the worship of red coats, and will never marry a civilian. Then the girl who is secretly sick of the army, and would like to catch a nabob, a ship-owner, fur-trader, or something solid of that kind. And next we have the young married Flirt, who is wedded to a marching sub, whose professional advancement she must assist by her affability towards his superior officers.

This last type is common to all professions, but in colonial garrisons the young married Flirt has opportunities not afforded her at home. At an Indian station, for instance, she is often the only pretty woman in the place. Other women there are, but ugly. The colonel's wife is fat and fifty; the major's is thin and sour; the adjutant has a young wife who gives herself airs, but is mortally plain, and for that reason affects a rigid propriety of demeanour, and takes up her ground as the inveterate enemy of the Flirt. But the Flirt does not care a pin. She is hospitable to profusion, as Indian cheapness in all things but beverages allows her to be; and if her husband's means do not admit of his purchasing unstinted wine and Allsopp, she makes him run up debts. One thing is certain: that her guests never lack for anything, and her drawing-



room becomes the regular rendezvous of the garrison officers and the Civil Service officials two or three times a week. It is at once a club, a refreshment-room, and something like a casino. The Flirt sings a little, plays a little, and dances a good deal. She is always ready to let the room be cleared for a waltz. She practises Indian dances with scarves, and the dances of the *Almées*, or rather those

plastic contortions which go by Terpsichorean names among the beauties of Eastern seraglios.

The numerous servants that attend upon an Indian household enable a pretty woman to give herself all the graces of a queen.



She is worried by no menial work ; everything is done for her ; she has only to lie on a sofa and command, whilst obedient Hindoos work the punkahs above her pretty head, or brush flies away from her with bunches of peacocks' feathers. Then England and its

fashions being so far away, the Indian station belle can improvise fashions for herself, selecting cuts, colours, and textures which she knows to be best suited to her style of beauty. She comes out in surprising Indian shawls, Chinese silks, light and transparent as muslin, and Japanese satins of heavenly azure blue. At all these experiments in dress—some of them very *risquées*—the other women exclaim, but by-and-by they pay her the sincerest flattery of imitation; for they see that the men like it, and break out into continual raptures about the Flirt's being irresistibly fascinating, original, and adorable; quite too nice, in fact, to use the jargon *à la mode*.

A beauty who has been plain Miss Brown at home, living in a small villa at Rochester or Southsea, feels on reaching Indian soil as if she had been promoted to a throne. She can do no ill. From the colonel to the smallest drummer-boy, every soul in the regiment is her slave. She has the band to play outside her bungalow when she gives a dinner. She good-naturedly patronises the sergeants' wives; and if a smart-looking private strikes her fancy she gets him promoted. In the matter of leave-giving, punishments, and petty regimental persecutions, she is supreme arbiter; and if a subaltern happens to offend her, he had best exchange rapidly into another corps, for she has quite power enough to crush him like a beetle. No man can guess the might of a regimental beauty's little finger until he has foolishly put himself in the way of being pressed down by it.

The mere fact that a woman should be a Flirt proves her husband to be a very weak man or a base one. Generally he is a rogue; for there is something in the honourable character even of a weak man which exercises a moral restraint upon his wife, and prevents her from transgressing given bounds. Or if she be irrestrainable, she goes clean over the bounds ostentatiously and defiantly, leaving her weak lord to maunder or fly into vindictive rages like an infuriated sheep, according to his mood at the moment.

But when one sees a young woman cutting frisky capers under the marital eye, one may be sure that her husband is a creature who makes some profit out of the said jinks; and this is truer in the army than elsewhere. The husband of a Regimental Flirt may not fill his brother-officers with respect but the world wags, very prosperously with him for all that. The debts which he contracts get somehow paid; he never wants a good coat for his back, nor a fine-flavoured cigar, nor a five-pound note for pocket-money. Pro-

motion comes to him rather out of the regular way; and if at a pinch he wants a few hundred pounds to better his social status, the sum is opportunely got on easy terms from a relative of his wife's, whose name she does not mention and which he forgets to ask.

By degrees the creature is dragged up by his wife to some post of permanent emolument, where he is in a position to crow over other men, his betters. He generally sets up as an implacable censor of morals. He lays the ban of his respectability upon youngsters who have been guilty of boyish follies, and helps to expel such from the service and from clubs 'for conduct unbecoming officers and gentlemen.' He possibly ends by getting to be a general, a colonial governor, or a bank director. So long as his wife remains pretty she is his Providence, and he treats her with proper respect. When she ceases to please he often rewards her for past benefits by beating her, or driving her to drink by a systematic course of verbal unkindness, such as only fellows of his kidney can use towards women. Occasionally, if the Flirt has retained her power of attraction after the bloom of youth has gone, husband and wife remain allies till death parts them. Madame becomes the centre of a social circle of strong religious proclivities, and her husband piously leads in the singing of a hymn after a tea-fight.

The Regimental Flirt who is utterly sick of the army might seem to be an uncommon sort of girl; but just as there are ecclesiastical Flirts who are weary of the Church and its ministers, so there are regimental damsels upon whom an overdose of military life has produced the usual effects of a surfeit. This is especially prone to be the case with the daughters of those poor officers who have to pinch themselves and half-starve their families in order to keep up what they call their dignity. A girl of this class can see no fun in the gold lace that costs so much money, and in the taxing duties which bring in so little pay. Even the music of the regimental band becomes odious to her ears, from a recollection of the heavy subscription which is wrung from her impecunious father to maintain it.

Or again, a girl of innate refinement is cast by ill-luck with a regiment whose officers happen to be a raffish set of snobs and churls—pipe-smokers, beer-swillers, courtiers of barmaids and shopwenches. The regiment is ordered abroad, and she has an opportunity of taking stock of them all on board the troopship. There, if anywhere, their social qualities ought to come out; but there is not



THE REGIMENTAL FLIRT ON FOREIGN SERVICE.

a man among the number whom she can flirt with. At dinner in the saloon, at the daily parade of the men on the fo'c's'le, in the moonlight evenings on the deck, the disgusted girl espies their clownishness and lack of wit. She compares them with the officers of the other 'reliefs' on board—some of them nice dashing fellows in the cavalry—and with the naval officers of the troopship, all of them perfect gentlemen, of good manners and great gallantry, and she moans to think that her fate has bound her to a regiment of such dolts.

The troopship reaches its destination—say Gibraltar—and the boorish lot sink into the same low habits as at home, becoming more offensive, however, in their conceit at lording it on a foreign soil. Then the refined girl falls to hating these officers, and through them the whole regiment, and by degrees the entire army. Bringing her sarcastic powers to bear upon the routine of military life, she decides that the whole thing is a ridiculous mummery; she even doubts the valour of the officers she so intensely dislikes, and thinks she would not trust them to fight in time of war. She says these things bitterly enough in their hearing; she repeats them in the hearing of civilians, which is much worse, and thereby draws down scoldings from her father. Perhaps she has a bout of words with the colonel's wife, who affects to be proud of the regiment, and a tiff with the colonel himself, who growls that, if she were his child, he would have her whipped.

There is no limit to the animosity of a girl who has once given out that she hates the service, and makes a point of inculcating her contempt for it on others. The army has so many detractors among the mercantile classes, whom the arrogance of officers displeases, that a girl of this kind now and then weds a wealthy merchant, on the strength of 'the sharp funny things' she has said about 'those oafs in red coats.' Or she marries a parson. Regimental girls are at all times very much inclined to do that; for to them the quiet parsonages or collegiate cloisters, which certain ecclesiastical Flirts find so slow, are elysium. Nothing enchants the Regimental Flirt so much as to be quit of the atmosphere of tobacco-smoke and pipeclay, which so tickles the senses of her clerical sister. Her dream is of vicarages overgrown with honeysuckle and eglantine; her delight is in choral church-services; and her ideal of a hero generally appears in white cravat and an M.B. waistcoat, if not in a cassock of the new Ritualist fashion. If mankind were ruled by

a paternal government, the daughters of clergymen would marry officers, and those of officers clergymen, and the world would possibly be happier than it is just at present.



IX.

THE SEASIDE FLIRT.

THERE is a girl who, living in a remote country place, goes to the seaside for one month in the year. Of course, during that month of comparative bliss she flirts. But all through the rest of the year she does no flirting even by letter. So, albeit to her seaside acquaintance she may seem a Flirt, yet it is obvious that flirting is only her recreation, not her business. She is no more a flirt than a man who occasionally pops at a sparrow is a sportsman.

The true Seaside Flirt lives by the sea. The half-season is her harvest-time, when there are a few visitors to notice her, but not enough to eclipse her. In the full season there are balls, races, concerts; in the half-season there is—flirting. A ride upon the sands, even on the backs of ill-saddled donkeys, may easily be turned into an imaginary ride for life. A shrimping excursion, besides offering chances for a display of neat ankles, brings about solitary wanderings, two by two, among the rocks. A sail in a small boat in rough weather affords opportunities for the exhibition of nerve and nautical knowledge combined; while a fishing-party



THE SEASIDE FLIRT.



by torchlight leads to so many nice things in the way of huddlings together under one tarpaulin, little screams when the boat rocks, delighted exclamations and joint action when the fish is speared or netted, that the mere mention of it will set any acute girl blushing.

Should the place be a port, the landing of foreign cattle may be construed into danger, and may be made the occasion of a gallant rescue; or an injudicious attempt to swim at bathing-time will perhaps challenge the bravery of the other sex. Here it may be remarked that the foreign custom, which puts men into bathing-costume as well as women, has its advantages, if only this one of allowing the rescuer of a fair swimmer to carry his lovely burden on to the beach in sight of an applauding crowd, which cannot well be done arrayed as Englishmen are at present when they bathe.

There is no little circumstance which a clever girl will not convert into a chance for flirting. The well-timed loss of a purse or a dog in the place where our lone damsel is a stranger, a dispute with a fly-driver, the loss of a hat in a high wind, a sudden sousing from a too boisterous wave, or the dropping of a handkerchief over the pier-railings, are all little difficulties that may be turned to account. 'So silly of me—so good of you: really I ought to have some one always by my side to take care of me.' 'Lucky some one!' 'Oh, you're joking; but really I am ashamed to have given you so much trouble.'



The paradise of a Flirt, though, is a yacht. No horrid billiard-room to take up the time of the interesting man; no need to run away from cigar-smoke in the exhilarating fresh air. Frequent meals, and gay; frequent nips of liqueurs, or mulled wines, to keep the cold out, and prescribed as indispensable to health;

and then the privilege of appearing to lose one's balance, and needing the prop of a stalwart arm. No visible impropriety either if the proprietor of the stalwart arm does hug a little in conveying the fair and unsteady one to a seat. Add to this that Etiquette, which would be shocked at seeing Miss Jill and Mr. Jack walking up and down an hotel corridor for an hour at midnight, can look on unmoved at a moonlight promenade on the deck of a yacht, even when it extends pretty far into the small hours. Life is a chain of inconsistencies.

The one-month-a-year Flirt has a keen eye for the names on the visitors' list of the seaside town to which she resorts. The odds are that she discovers on it some man she knows—her brother's friend, or the son of papa's friend—anyhow, one with whom she has flirted before, and whom she describes as 'the only man who can wrap my scarf comfortably round me on this bitterly cold beach.' This paragon she ferrets out and catechises as to what he has done since they last met. She is sure he has been flirting, and lectures him about it, saying it is high time he settled down soberly, as she herself thinks of doing. Thereupon she walks her truant off to see some dear, interesting, gossiping old sailor. If he did not go with her, she might not find the man: does he mind being seen so often walking with her?

When a young friend is engaged to be married, the Flirt eagerly becomes her chaperon, knowing that her male acquaintances will rally round her more quickly while she is protecting the fair flower. And when the Flirt is again alone, she keeps very close to some old gentleman friend in a Bath-chair, sometimes carrying on a flirtation with him, for want of better material, sometimes using him as a convenient escort.

Our friend, thanks to an iron constitution, which the month of ozone-breathing develops finely, does more execution in the daytime than in the evenings. She is not quite enough informed about arts, sciences, or London tattle to shine in conversation, nor sufficiently accomplished to dazzle by her music and dancing. Her circumstances do not enable her to compete in dress with ladies and nymphs of the 'great world;' but her powers of sustaining a fatiguing walk, row, or ride; her ready flow of small talk, and quick sympathy, make her a delightful companion wherever the proportion of gentlemen to ladies is about three to one. It is only when temporary helplessness looks pretty that she assumes it; one

of her favourite sayings in merry company being, 'Wherever there's fun going, I'm your man.'

Poor girl! she does not get quite as much fun as would be good for her; for when her month at the seaside or on board a yacht is gone—and how fearfully quick it goes!—she feels in a sad way while packing up her boxes to return home. One more year's pleasure past, and another twelvemonth's dullness to come. It is only a cynic who would grudge this interesting occasional Flirt the amount of enjoyment she can squeeze out of her four weeks' annual trifling with the strong sex.

There is another sort of Seaside Flirt, who is found more often on foreign coasts, and in the smaller towns thereof, than at Brighton or Scarborough. She is the daughter of somebody under a cloud.

Her father or perhaps her brother has gone to the dogs. She finds it pleasanter not to live in England. She has no taste for purposeless travelling, and soon establishes herself in some quiet watering place, such as Fécamp, Tréport, or St. Valéry. She has sense enough to conquer her first impulse towards utter seclusion, and to select a place not *too* lonely; possibly she would go so far as to select Dieppe; but not Boulogne, which has too bad a name. She has given her address to a few friends, and some few more may find her out. But she is aware that a large number of her summer friends will never ask for her again, and she is resigned.

This girl has perhaps not been a Flirt in England. Staid old country ladies had been her valued friends; gentlemen had respected her highly; some had been intimate with her, but she had not cared for flirting, nor encouraged it. Flirting is tame between old family friends, and it was among these that she lived.

But coming without introduction and alone with her mother to a new place, the desolate English girl has new habits to contract and new schemes to form. Her acquaintance now is among the ephemeral passers-by. Men are struck with her beauty, and with her air of melancholy, which she tries in vain to throw off. They cannot get at her history, which, of course, heightens the interest in her. They find her infinitely more agreeable than the empty-headed milliners' lay figures which they are accustomed to meet at such places; and if by chance some portion of her story leaks out, the pity of the men silences the tongues of the women who would rail against her. So, by degrees, after one man has innocently

asked her home-address, that he may have the pleasure of renewing his acquaintance with her, and another has told her that he prolongs his stay in the place solely on her account, and a third has owned that a neighbouring seaside town has more attractions in the way of scenery, but not (with a bow) such company as one



meets here, the fair exile insensibly yields to the temptations of flattery, and, finding that every one expects her to flirt, turns and drifts with the stream.

It is virtually a question of flirt or sink. She fears that by avoiding company she would confess to the intense shame she feels at the disgrace that has fallen on her family. She also recognises that, having no longer a chance of getting married through family influence, she must secure an establishment, if she can, by her own sole charms and accomplishments. She sits and works at some piece of tapestry, as the French ladies do in the local assembly-rooms, while the band plays of an afternoon; she attends Sunday services at the British Consulate; she is always superlatively neat

in dress; and she remarks that she can play the most difficult pieces of music at sight. She is very assiduous at cultivating her French; it may some day be the only language she will have the opportunity of speaking. Yet she does not like France, and would not settle there for worlds, so she thinks. 'Oh, those Frenchmen! such figures!' she owns, laughing, to an English adorer, and the



'Why, Marquis! you are looking younger than ever.'

'Yes, truly, it's an old habit of mine. I'm Conservative.'

pair quiz the Gaul in company. The adorer is young, and has a tawny moustache. He speaks low, and looks into her eyes whilst addressing her. He seems to know nothing of her history, and alludes to a pleasant country hall and park which he will inherit when his uncle dies. For the present he has only an allowance of £500 a year; but he knows a friend who married upon that and got on famously, because his wife loved him and made a little money go a long way. Does *she* know how to husband money? 'Let me look at that ring on your finger,' breaks off the adorer suddenly, and adds that it reminds him of one which his mother used to wear. The ring is held out, and the little hand with it. Adorer inspects both, and gives a squeeze. 'Oh!' exclaims the fair exile, pink and agitated; but a peddler, offering polished pebbles for sale, interrupts this idyl on the beach, and the proposal which was starting to the adorer's lips is adjourned till the morrow.

Alas! before next day somebody has been at work saying something, and the adorer has vanished. He has not even gone through the formality of forging an excuse for his departure, and saying good-bye. He has decamped, as though he had had a narrow escape of a great danger. Exula does not cry, but sets her lips, and perceives that there is a gulf thenceforth between her and the land of her birth. She makes sure it was that odious Mrs. Black, with the ugly daughters, who circulated her story. Mrs. Black cuts her next time they meet on the parade; young Black, with the eye-glass, remains faithful to her, but has the impudence to wink as he accosts her. Young Brown, too, a fellow with orange whiskers and a good heart, tells her that the women are abusing her like pitch, but that he doesn't care. She packs Black and Brown about their business. No more English company for her. She is too sensitive to brook slights, and too proud to accept sympathy; she will not stoop either to the degradation of going to mix with other proscripts at Boulogne, where none would dare cast the stone at her. She and her mother change their residence, and repair to a town wholly French, where they commence the process of entirely denationalising themselves.

Exula changes her religion. She and her mother go to mass, and make friends with the parish priest, who comes sometimes to dinner. They have French servants; read French newspapers; and give up corresponding with England. Their piety gets talked

of in the town, and the priest gives out that they are fervent Catholics who have left their Protestant country because they could not practise their religion in peace there. Every Frenchman knows that religious persecutions are still rife in Queen Victoria's dominions.

By dint of prudence, propriety, and paying their way regularly—by dint also of the unsuspecting priest's good offices—the two Englishwomen collect a little coterie of French friends round them. The girl is too pretty not to excite attention. She accepts

invitations to *thés*. She consents to show off at the piano, and sings some English ballads which become the rage. Her French improves apace, and she can understand the compliments of red-trousered officers, as well as bandy chit-chat with young *rentiers*. However, marriage is a business in France, and before any Frenchman commits himself to an offer, inquiries are made through the priest as to the amount



of *dot* which the 'belle Miss' possesses. The intimation that she is living on an allowance which may or may not be continued after her marriage thins off a number of candidates. Not but that several young men of twenty-five and thirty would be content to marry her without dower did their papas and mammas permit it, but their papas and mammas will not, and according to French law they have power to prohibit.

There remain some men past forty. The English girl touches them wonderfully by her enthusiasm about France. There never were such men as Frenchmen. So much politer than the men of other countries—so much wittier, braver, and more companionable. The literature of France is delightful, so are its climate, wines, theatres, cities, boulevards, and the dresses of its ladies. The English girl says she is dying to learn how to dress like French-



THE MAN OF FORTY'S MATERNAL UNCLE.

women, who have a *je ne sais quoi* impossible for foreigners to catch. The gallant Gaul assures her that she has quite seized that *je ne sais quoi*, and completed it with a touch of English grace and piquancy. The time comes when the exiled girl sees that one at

least among the middle-aged wooers who say these things sincerely feels them. He is fat and bald, but he has £600 a year, which looks bigger because he calls it 15,000 francs of income. He evidently thinks it a fine competency too, for it enables him to live in greater comfort than an Englishman with twice the money. He has a country house which he styles a *château*, a garden which he terms a park; he is mayor of his village, and a knight of the Legion of Honour.

Such *partis* are not to be caught every day, remarks the priest the day before the man of forty's maternal uncle comes to pop the question in his nephew's name, for Frenchmen think it bad taste to go through this formality in person. One may be sure that the maternal uncle lays great stress on the fact that his nephew asks for no *dot*; such disinterestedness seems to him to savour of mediæval chivalry. He says that the notary will draw up a contract in which mademoiselle will have a suitable portion settled on her. Mademoiselle's mother thereon accepts, and mademoiselle herself fixes a day when she and her ripe betrothed shall be introduced to all their friends assembled for the signature of the abovesaid contract as an affianced couple. After all, this is a better ending than many other exiles can pretend to. The English girl who in her own country should marry a fat man of forty, of dubious lineage, and having but 600*l.* per annum, would not be thought to be doing well for herself; but circumstances and lands alter cases.





X.

THE TOURIST FLIRT.

THE Flirt who has failed to find a husband during the London season may recruit her health in travelling for a fresh campaign, and perhaps pick up what she wants into the bargain. In foreign hotels marriages are arranged as frequently as in London drawing-rooms

But the tourist season is more suitable to the married Flirt than to the girl. The latter, held in bondage by her family—accompanied often by a cohort of brothers and younger sisters—and inclined, for prudence sake, to be more demure abroad than in England, stands at something of a disadvantage towards the married Flirt, who looks upon touring as a period of complete liberty. She may have her husband with her, or may be travelling alone with her maid and a *dame de compagnie*. Perhaps her husband is dead, or perhaps he has ceased to care for her jinks—in any case the married Flirt, being removed from the control of prudish English eyes, plunges with delight into the freedom of *incognita* existence. As her objects are not similar to the girl Flirt's, she has not the same reasons to be particular. It matters little whether her neighbour at the *table d'hôte* be eligible as a husband, since she has no thought of marrying him. So long as he is agreeable, gallant, enterprising, she can get out of him all the fun she wants. In this way the married Flirt picks up *cavalieri serventi* wherever she goes—to-day a Frenchman, to-morrow a Russian Prince, next week a Wallachian shiny with



hair-oil and diamonds. She has a smattering of all languages, or, at least, can understand a compliment in any tongue.

To some of these married Flirts autumn travelling is really the most pleasurable business. Look at the pretty blue-eyed English-woman who steps out of her hotel on the Rhigi to watch the sun rise on a crisp September morning. She is wrapped in a fur cloak to keep the cold off, and a polite Italian with moustache who stands beside her arranges its folds, and lends his arm that she may steady herself on the rocky ground. She had never seen that Italian before yesterday, when he sat next her at the *table d'hôte*; but it turns out that they are both going the round of Switzerland, and it is tacitly agreed that they shall go together.

Why not? There is no spoken convention on the subject, and they do not drive up to the station in the same cab, nor, on arriving at their destinations, repair to their hotel in company; but they contrive to travel in the same railway carriages, and in the different hotels where they alight their

rooms are often contiguous. One week you may find them at the Hôtel National of Geneva, whence they proceed on steam-boat trips about Lake Lemman as far as Ouchy or Vevey. The week after behold them at Lucerne or at Berne, sauntering together under the arcades of the picturesque old streets, or feeding the bears in the municipal bear-pit. But suddenly there is a dissolution of partnership; for in another few days our married Flirt turns up at either Ems or Homburg, but this time with a Bavarian Count to escort her when she goes to drink the waters.

The German watering-places have much declined from their gaiety since the gambling-tables have been closed; and those who go to them in the hope of finding any vestige of the old revelry are disappointed. Ten years ago they were the casinos of the plutocracy throughout Europe. Now they have become the resort of a good many people who positively require the waters for purposes of



THE FROZEN CORPSES AT THE HOSPICE
ST. BERNARD.

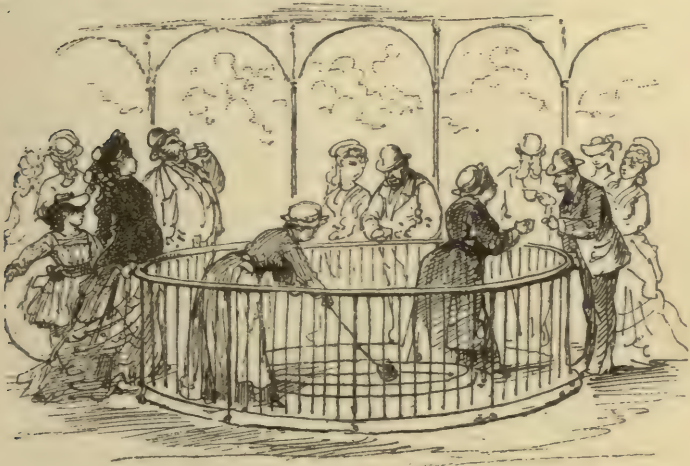
health, and whose Bath-chairs are not an enlivening feature in the gardens of the Kursaals. Nevertheless, the beautiful scenery



remains, and the bands of music, and the attraction of an occasional crowned head, who comes with a large suite, and causes crowds of aristocratic families to come also.

The married Flirt at Ems will possibly find it convenient to

declare that her health is delicate. Her physician has prescribed her the waters that taste of steel, and she must mind and take two hours' walking exercise every day. These are fine opportunities for the Bavarian Count. By a happy coincidence he is always loitering near the ferruginous spring when the lady comes down at eight, at noon, and at four P.M. to take her drink. He passes her the goblet which the German attendant wench hands up brimming with the tepid stuff; he laughs with her at the grimaces she makes; and then when the jorum has been gulped down he is ready to attend



her in her walk at a quick march through the gardens, or out into the country among the woods and fields of maize. As all this whets the appetite, the Bavarian is delighted to see how his fair *Engländerin* tackles the viands and wines at the hotel dinner. The Italian might not have been so pleased, for men of his nation like to see a woman feed herself with pastry and *confetti*; and perhaps that was why she parted from him. Honeymooning in Germany requires that both should be of one mind about eating.

Besides, eating forms one of the chief resources of flirting. On the Mediterranean steamers that ply between Marseilles and Civita Vecchia, and thence to Brindisi and Alexandria, the Flirt, freshened by the salt breezes, makes her four or five meals a day; and half the time of her lovers is spent in fetching her ices or glasses of

sugared water on deck between whiles. For you can get ices on board these Mediterranean boats ; and when the blue sea is calm as a lake, and the sun not too hot to prevent the passengers from sitting under an awning, the Flirt finds it not disagreeable to relieve the trouble of returning answers to foolish questions of the soft sort by trifling with one of those many-hued blocks of Neapolitan ice which look like soap.

However, even the Mediterranean is apt to tumble about ; and in such rough conjunctures all continental gallants, whether Frenchmen, Bavarians, or Greeks, dive hastily into their cabins, leaving the English tourists masters of the deck. The Englishman is not very prone to sea-sickness, and for this reason makes a better maritime companion to the Flirt than any other. Being adventurous, too, he will, perhaps, prolong his acquaintance with the lady who has struck his fancy at Brindisi by accompanying her to Egypt, where they steam up the Nile together as far as the second cataract, and do the Pyramids on their way back. Everybody knows that doing the Pyramids with a lady involves nothing less than lifting her continually in one's arms, to assist her ascent from stone to stone until the platform on the summit is reached. There are, to be sure, black Nubians, whose business it is to do this for money : but the tourist who would win a pretty Flirt's regard will not surrender such delicious labour to hirelings.



XI.

COUNTRY-HOUSE AND TOWN-HOUSE FLIRTS.

‘WHAT is all this smoke about?’ ‘O sir, it’s Miss Louie, who got on to the roof last night with Mr. Tom, and stopped up all the chimneys with old newspapers.’

Miss Louie is a Country-house Flirt, who delights in playing practical jokes with her cousin Tom, or with anybody else who may be handy. She thinks nothing of clipping up a hair-brush into the bed of a bachelor-guest. She makes apple-pie beds for crusty old gentlemen, judges and suchlike; she muffles up the clappers of bells; puts aperient waters into the tea-urn; and paints the tail of a Countess’s pet Havannah sky-blue.

The Countess happens to be a Flirt too—a *grande dame* too high-placed for scandal to assail her. She abhors practical joking, and preaches to Louie—a sort of connection of hers—on the utter bad taste of the thing. Louie does not care. She puts on a comical pout when being lectured, and delights to plague the Countess above all other women. Why? Because the Countess is what Louie calls an arrant poacher, for ever trying to appropriate unattached men, who are not fair game for married women.

Louie is nineteen, but looks younger. She would have got married two years ago, but for practical jokes played upon suitors who had serious intentions towards her. Wishing to try the nerve of one, she took a loaded gun from his hand, said, ‘Mind your eye,’ and shot both barrels over his head, within an inch of his hat. He swooned with fright, and Louie laughed till the tears ran out of her eyes. Another suitor was bragging of his horsemanship. Louie defied him to ride a donkey of her own, which she alleged to be as tame as a lamb, but she had sent Tom to hire a vicious Nubian jackass from a strolling circus; and when the horseman had bestridden this beast, it carried him through a quick-set hedge, where he left much of his clothes and portions of his skin. He did not forgive his *inamorata* for the intense mirth with which she hailed this exploit.

Louie likes no one except Tom, whom she plagues as much as

others, and who often calls her a 'little brute.' There has been no talk of marriage between them. Tom would hesitate proposing to a girl who might sew up his coat-tails on his wedding morning. She, on her side, has no present thoughts of matrimony. She likes flirting too well. She flirts with everybody; deliberately leading one man after another to believe that she is in earnest, and then coolly enlightening him as to her real sentiments by some joke, which sends him away besplashed with ridicule and gnashing his teeth. Louie is very pretty, and can assume all sorts of manners. She can sham sentiment, melancholy, deep corroding love; and she once nearly drove a simple silly lover frantic with terror, by saying she would die for him, and flinging herself into a lake with her clothes on. She can swim; and when she scrambled out remarked, laughing, that she had tried the water-cure for love, and that truly it had cured her.

Louie does not like London, though she has spent two whole seasons there, and beguiled her weariness as she could by decoying the Countess's lovers from her. She was the Countess's visitor, and my lady had to threaten more than once to send her home. There is no describing the pitch of secret enmity to which these two arrived; and if it had not been for the fear of what Louie's malicious tongue would say were she packed off, her ladyship would have broken with the girl once and for ever.

For the Countess is one of those ladies for whom life is love and love is life. She has a husband, but never troubles herself as to his whereabouts. They are occasionally together, when they are good friends enough, unless the Countess happens to be troubled with one of her nervous headaches, which make her waspish; but at ordinary times my lord goes his way and my lady hers. Twenty men at least, among the best in society, have, turn by turn, acted as the Countess's *cavaliere servente*, attending her in all places, and having their *petites entrées* to her boudoir; but, as we have already said, she is too high-perched for scandal to touch her. Who has a right to complain if her husband does not? She changes lovers almost as frequently as a jockey does horses. Every man who is for the moment a 'lion' in society becomes the butt of her shafts; and many of these lions, succumbing, have had the honour of being led in her train for a week or two like pet spaniels. She has tried all sorts of men, poets, painters, warriors, statesmen, and foreigners. An Italian and a Hungarian fought about her with pistols; a



Frenchman and a Spaniard exchanged blustering epigrams in her honour. The very effrontery of the things she says and does closes the mouths of people who would criticize her if she were more timid. Nobody believes ill of her, because if people believed anything at all they would have to believe too much.

Such a monitress as my lady might have converted madcap Louie



into a Flirt of the finest brilliancy, and she conscientiously tried her best for the girl whom she befriends for family reasons. But Louie—like most practical-joking maidens—has money of her own, and does not care whether she is befriended or not. At any rate, she claims to go her own way, and that way is not the Countess's.

Perhaps she divines more about her chaperon's goings on than she ought to be able to do if girls were as innocent as novels paint them. She has uttered a queer thing or two at times, which have made the Countess's ears tingle, and turned her lover for the nonce to the colour of mulberry. 'My dear, you must weigh your words,' her ladyship would say, biting her lips. 'Why, if there's nothing in them they can't hurt you,' was the pert response.

Girls like this Miss Louie have their uses, for, Flirts themselves, they can divulge all the tricks of their craft for the amusement of ears masculine. They are the spies and traitresses of the women's camp. For the sake of raising a laugh they will blow up secrets like so much loose powder, and they are the first to tell men that the saintly purity, the angelic sweetness, the virginal modesty ascribed to women and girls are all 'bosh.' Louie has before now

entertained her cousin Tom with recitals of the conversations she used to hold at school with other girls, and there was the grin of semi-incredulity on Tom's lips at the enormity of these conversations. When reproached for her flightiness by those who have a right to reproach her, Louie usually says, 'Oh, boys will be boys; why shouldn't girls be—boys too?'

Flirts of Louie's temperament make good wives for hypochondriacal men, who may be the better for a little healthy excitement; and, on the whole, it may be said that the man who marries a Flirt at all had best wed a merry one.



XII.

THE SENTIMENTAL FLIRT.

UNTIL arriving at the age of twenty-five the girl of sentimental mood is only a quiet uninteresting maiden, with a strong bias for poetry, chiefly of the modern school, that will not scan or construe. She has an album, and collects autographs; she writes verses, and has drafted the plot of a three-volume novel, not written; she despises this age of money. One day she wakes up and reflects that woman was not made to live alone. Many of her old school-friends are already wives and mothers; and in the numerous novels from Mudie's which she peruses she notices a tendency to depreciate the matrimonial chances of virgins who have reached her time of life. Her poetical instinct warns her that there is no romance in old maids.

So she rouses for the fray and puts on war-paint. A fine figure and carriage, a well-trained intellect, a strictly conventional manner, a good family connection, a few art-treasures as heirlooms, a domestic taste underlying her keen poetical sympathy with wives of the Guinevere pattern—all these things might combine to make her an excellent wife for a man of easy temper, not addicted to claim autocratic powers in the home circle.

But Lavinia—as we may call her—is beset by difficulties caused by her peculiar temperament, nourished on Tennyson and Browning, and fortified by Swinburne. An average man will not do for a damsel who feels a deep contempt for men who have not, like herself, set their faces against a mercenary age. Lavinia's husband must be in some twenty respects superior to all other women's husbands. He need not be rich or noble; she would, on the whole, prefer that he should be neither, so that he might not dwarf her with his superiority. But he must have every sort of physical and intellectual advantage, co-operating to make him a glorious compound of mind and matter. He must be handsome and modest, fascinating and faithful; able to knock down an ox one minute, and tenderly to fasten a fallen earring to his wife's ear the next. He must be peaceful, yet firm; an artist, orator, sportsman, statesman; a hero of land, sea, or balloons, yet never bored by small-talk; a *savant*, without being a pedant; well dressed, but not extravagant—such a man as never was, even in books, and, alas, never can be.

But Lavinia believes in his existence, in her power to find him, in her ability to discover merit which before was hidden. So she draws out, examines, and criticizes all her male friends. Of female friends she has only one, and into her ears she pours her plaint. The poet is sickly, the dragoon fast, the divine slow, the merchant ignoble, the baronet a *roué*. Not one may marry her; and at last, by dint of disenchantments, she grows sour, except to her canary, and hates men almost as much as she detests married women. But she sketches miniatures with pen and pencil of the man she could have loved, and these much resemble the wax presentments in barbers' windows.

The Sentimental Flirt, after a period of misanthropic retirement, often takes to literature, and flirts with authors. She submits a copy of her verses to the Laureate, and, getting a polite reply, is emboldened to try a work in prose. While the book is going



THE SENTIMENTAL FLIRT.

through the press she has an exciting time correcting proofs ; but disillusion awaits her when the critics fall to flouting her heroes and heroines with ridicule. Her second attempt is not so trashy as the first. She aims determinedly at success by a story of conjugal impropriety, which strikes one of the most sensitive chords in the breasts of habitual readers of novels ; and though this second book gets a lavish share of abuse, it elevates its authoress to a distinct position in the world of letters.

Then she begins literary and epistolary flirtations with publishers, editors of magazines, brother-authors, and foreign translators. She defends the moral scope of her works in letters to the reviews, and develops a thesis of her own as to a recondite meaning of the Seventh Commandment. She mocks at British prudery, and says to herself that genius was ever venturesome. She puts a bust of Byron in her study. Surprise is created among the public when it becomes known that the authoress of so much 'spice' is not an experienced widow, nor a lady living on a pension earned by long service in the 'half-world,' but a lady of good connections, still young, and strictly virtuous. Strictly virtuous women of a sentimental turn often astonish the world by the depth and range of their knowledge.

But perhaps the Sentimental Flirt has taken to charity, instead of literature. In this case she becomes a distinguished member of the Society for the Protection of Animals. She busies herself about the grievances of dogs, cattle, and cats ; she founds a home for motherless kittens ; she bans the barbarity of foxhunting and game-shooting, and has serious ideas of inquiring whether the owners of racehorses cannot be brought to punishment for causing their nags to be unduly flogged. For men she does not care—at least, not for Englishmen ; but she will gladly start a fund to relieve Turks, Bulgarians, or Cossacks, because she conceives them to be animated with sentiments more romantic than she has met with in her own country.

After all, our highly cultured Lavinia is not proof against the blandishments of heroes of the Corsair type, and she becomes less and less proof against them as she grows older. Towards her thirty-second year she starts on a tour for Italy, and nearly leaves her reputation in the hands of a seductive Sicilian brigand, with a sugarloaf hat. She takes to painting, and gets Neapolitan lazzaroni to pose for her. One of this set becomes her servant, a

strapping dark-eyed fellow, with merry white teeth, whom she calls Beppo, and who answers her in a fondling whine, addressing her as 'Eccellenza.' She, perhaps, marries this creature, and soon after has to advertise in the papers that she will not be responsible for any debts which he may contract in her name.

Or, instead of marrying, Lavinia falls into anxiety about her soul, and embarks in spiritual flirtations with monks and plump Italian priests. She goes to Rome, and signalises herself by drop-



ping on her knees in the streets when religious processions pass; she kisses the toe of St. Peter's statue; she requests an audience of the Pope, and has a fit of hysterics in the Holy Father's presence. Her rotund monkish friends and still more rotund priestly advisers encourage her to give largely of her substance to conventual establishments; and during a week or two she wonders how she would herself look in a nun's habit. If it were possible to dress in white, with a scarlet cross and cape, she thinks she would take the vow; but the white-and-scarlet Carmelites happen to be a rigidly cloistered order, whose regulations would not suit Lavinia's taste. She would like to walk about the streets in nun's attire; but, seeing that the nuns who walk about are robed in hideous blacks and grays, she eventually gives up the idea.

Possibly Lavinia's impulses towards religion and self-sacrifice one day branch off in a Mahometan direction, and lead her into an Egyptian or Turkish seraglio. Lady Ellenborough is not the only Englishwoman by many who has discovered that romance, though banished from the rest of the world, still finds a refuge in the breasts of Mussulman cheiks; nor does the polygamous system rebuff, for a cheik who takes one gushing English spouse soon finds that he has got as many wives as he can manage.



XIII.

THE STUDIOUS FLIRT.

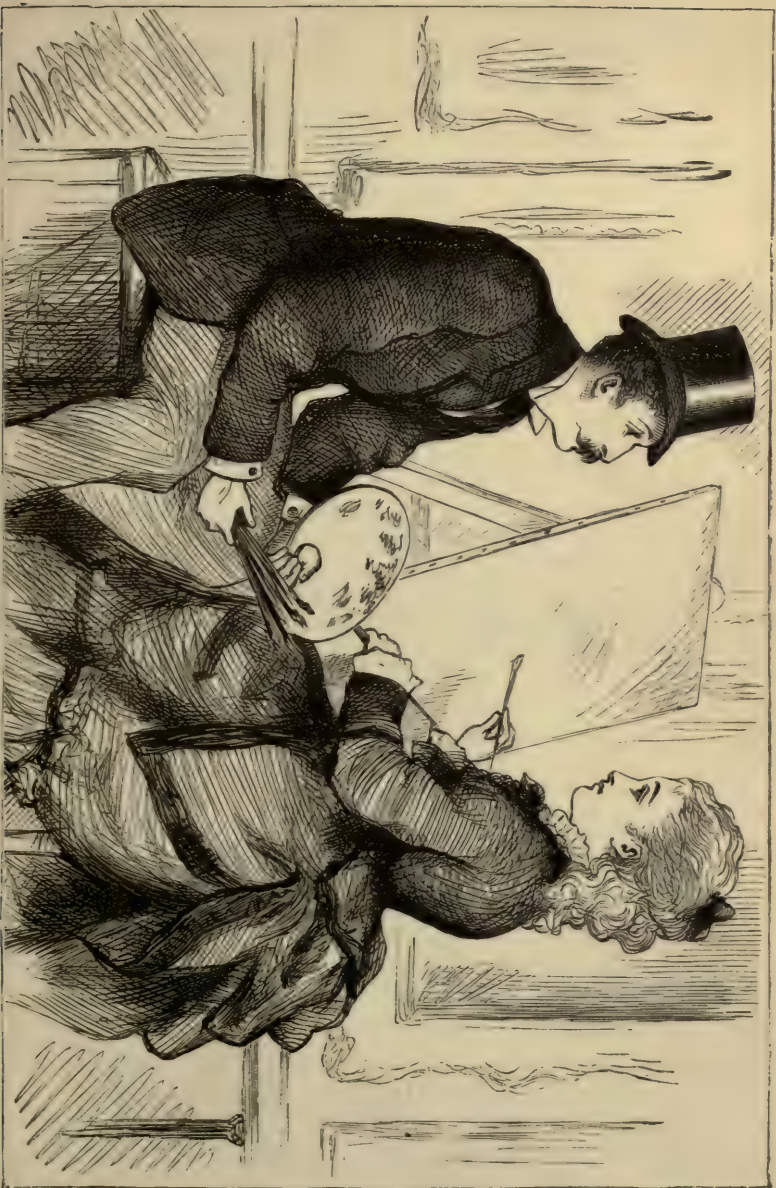
BEFORE taking leave of our subject we have a few words to say about the Studios Flirt.

The woman who is truly scientific is not a flirt. The genuine frequenter of the Round Room of the British Museum, of the South Kensington picture-galleries, or the lectures of the Society of Arts, would no more favour the advances of the male sex than would Pallas herself. But every true article has its imitations, every flower its parasites; and though the firmly rooted wall-flower of the National Gallery or of Exeter Hall would doubtlessly shrivel up like a mimosa under the male touch, yet the parasites, who are not truly studios, but only wish to seem so, behave very differently. Indeed, they too readily avail themselves of the opportunities which their pursuits furnish them with to carry on their flirtations in the most open way.

Young men, pushed by circumstances into learned society, may meet with young women dragged there by relations; or desperate flirts may even repair to these meetings on their own account, to hunt down the men who are too shy to show themselves at wedding breakfasts and similar matrimonial marts. And there are few things easier than to beg prettily for an explanation of that little difficulty which *Indocta* can never understand without a guide, but which *Studiosus* of course knows thoroughly how to explain.

An excuse being thus found for half-hours of conversation in which the chaperon takes little part, the down-hill road is safe and pleasant. Sometimes an old book-grub is sooner captured than a young one, both as being less on his guard and also as being less closely watched by the dragon aunt who generally presides over the destinies of studios young men. But woe to the damsel to whom the literate old gentleman uses the words 'my dear!' They mean that he is married long ago, and can be nothing to her. Even if widowed, those who say 'my dear' to a girl seen for the first time, seldom care to marry twice.

There is a Studios Flirt, who really has no pretence about her.



THE STUDIOUS FLIRT.

She has received an education of a very learned sort, which has early filled her mind with a taste for science. She is, perhaps, the daughter of a professor or archæological lecturer. She began to assist her father in correcting proofs when she was sixteen, and by the time she was twenty she had learned to take a serious interest



AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

in his pursuits. At her father's suggestion she tries her hand at an essay, which gets printed in a magazine. It treats of 'Woman's Dress in the Middle Ages,' and gives proof of observation and historical research. The style is, of course, loose, and the affected

use of learned words makes the article read somewhat ludicrously to the critics. It gets 'whipped' in consequence. The young lady bites her lip, but rallies. Her next contribution to the press is couched in a more serious vein, and secures for her a few compliments from the critics. After this, Miss Studiosa gets formally admitted into the ranks of the learned.

She dons a double eyeglass, and lets herself be elected an honorary fellow of an Archæological Society. Accompanied by her father, she joins summer excursions into Cornwall and Wales.



where cromlechs, funeral tumuli, and vestiges of Roman camps are to be found. She carries a reticule, into which she drops bits of flint, which are supposed to be arrow-heads and lance-heads of the Age of Stone. She becomes a connoisseur in antediluvian remains, and you could not deceive her about the precise age of a broken earthenware pot excavated from a sandpit.

But archæological excursions may lead to flirting. Those young professors in spectacles are often sly fellows, who can wink in stray corners, and convert the inspection of an old bone into an occasion

for saying soft things. Studiosa is not made of wood, and listens kindly to the compliments that are paid her. For all that, she would rather flirt with a dragoon than with a *savant*, because woman likes to assert her superiority, and there is no possibility of doing this with a man who knows more about bones and tumuli than she does.

But perhaps Studiosa botanises. In this case there are many fine days, when she can exchange soft nothings with young gentlemen interested, like her, in collecting ferns and orchids. She wears



a tin box slung to her side. She stoops to find rare specimens of vegetation growing in rocky nooks. Some of these are out of her reach, and she requires assistance to climb up to them. Studiosus, fresh from Oxford, lends her a hand or a 'back up.' Between them they succeed in uprooting the rare vegetable. Studiosa, in consigning it to her tin box, says, 'So kind of you!' Studiosus answers, 'There is nothing I would not do for you.' After which he tries his tongue at a compliment. 'I wish I were that fern.' 'Why?' 'Because it is next your heart.' 'Oh!' says Studiosa, and slings the tin box round to her right side; but she has blushed, and Studiosus is half caught already. If she will only be kind to him during the rest of the botanising trip, he will make her an offer of marriage at the moment of separation.

Studiosa, however, may go in for abstruser subjects than archæology and botany. There are many free-thinking young ladies in these times. They have read Darwin, Renan, Herbert Spencer, and Huxley. They have made up their minds that this is an age of shams; that religion is an error; and society, as at present established, a delusion. They sneer when they pass churches; they contribute to atheistical publications; they think that marriage is a civil contract, and that sensible people should never have the nuptial knot tied in a church.

Studiosa, as an atheist, is sure to be an awful person, and will either not marry at all or will marry a curate after she has repented. Men do not much care to have free-thinking wives; but a pious curate, falling in with a comely infidel, may haply try to convert her, and render himself very interesting in her eyes by so doing. He will speak so softly that Studiosa will be touched. She will have learned by this time that science is vanity, and that the reading of Darwin brings no spiritual consolation. She will hanker after church services, and dream of getting married in a church in regular bridal attire and with full choral service. If she have a little money the curate will propose to her, and they will make a great fuss together about her taking the Communion for the first time, and thereby sealing her abjuration. Learned young ladies who have forsworn religion are generally most anxious to have their re-entry into the fold affirmed in the most solemn manner possible. If Studiosa could have her way she would, when marrying the curate, have all Darwin's and Renan's books burned at the altar.



ON H.B.M.'S SERVICE.

I.

INTRODUCTORY.



A YOUNG man with a handle to his name, and who has an inborn talent for doing nothing agreeably, may find the British Diplomatic Service as pleasant a profession as he can select. Other people find their way into it, but are never quite at ease there. Diplomacy, in our time, can hardly be called a serious business, out of Russia. Formerly, Austria and Germany had some important negotiations, relating to dy-

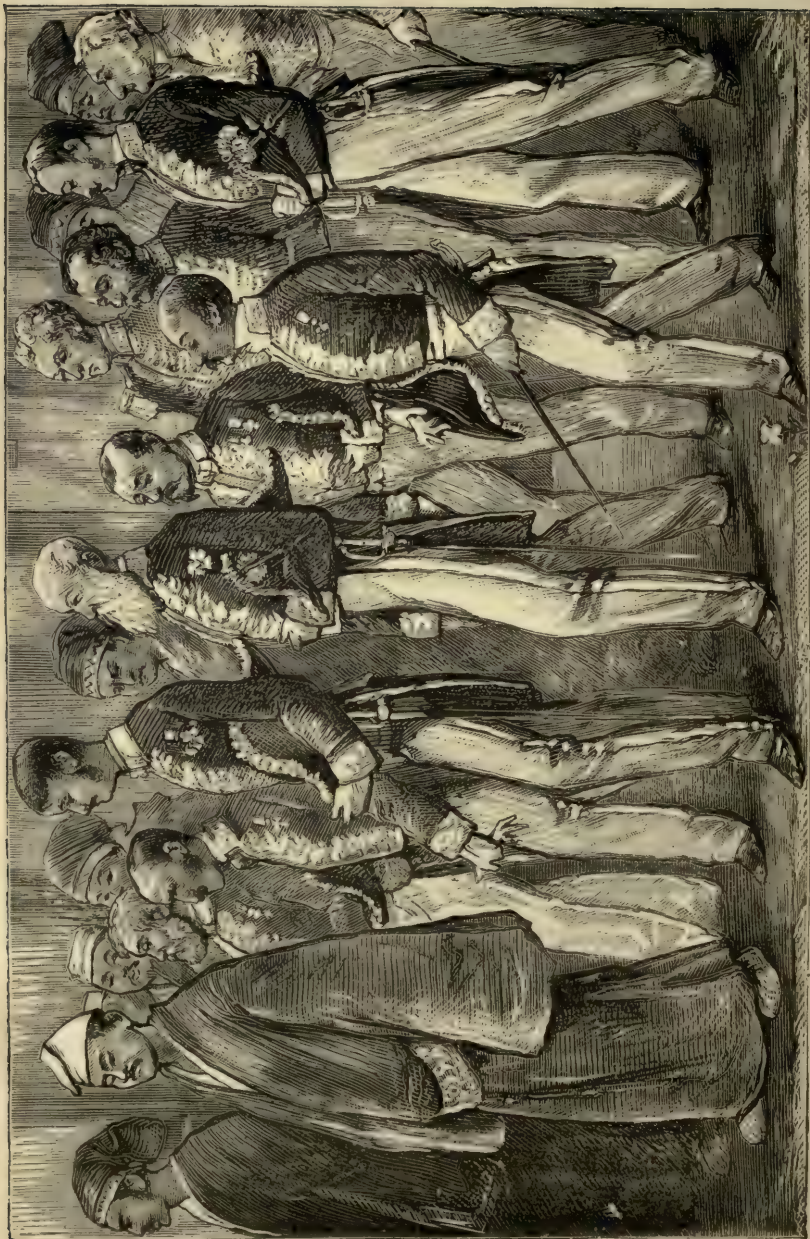
nastic questions, always going on at foreign Courts; and their Ambassadors were often consummate masters of the difficult and

delicate art of pleasing wisely. Now an Ambassador has no field for action, A pair of permanent clerks connected by an electric wire manage all his official affairs ; and whenever any event in the country where he resides arouses the smallest public attention, a lynx-eyed company of newspaper correspondents take the blush off his news, and put him to shame with it.

A modern Ambassador is not even allowed to be bumptious. He must eat the humble-pie offered to him, with lowliness and thanksgiving, if steadfastly minded to keep his salary. For, should he make any noise whatever, the local Government laugh him to scorn. They do not dream of wasting words on him, as the courtly Ministers of a bygone age were wont to do, when an Ambassador's dignity was held by international lawyers to be identical with that of the Sovereign whom he was supposed to represent. They merely set on foot a notable plan for obtaining his recall by private letters. Confidential notes having reference to his alleged backslidings are frequently exchanged between influential personages ; and as a host of rivals have been waiting for his Excellency's discomfiture ever since the day when his appointment first appeared in the *Gazette*, they soon get wind of his misfortune, and make an ugly rush at him, so that he is speedily brought to nought. A very small knot of people closely tied together really govern the world just now ; an Ambassador must contrive to form one of its threads, and to remain tightly bound in his place, if he expects to lie safe and snug.

A supple-backed colourless person, who observes the conditions tacitly dictated to him, will have no cause to complain of his lot while his connections are in office. The principal posts in the service are handsomely paid ; several noblemen and gentlemen have been known to receive from seven to ten thousand pounds a year, with a liberal margin for contingencies, though it was sometimes thought that they would hardly have earned so much for themselves in law or medicine, which are, nevertheless, better paid than most professions. A friendly Secretary of State, boldly backed up by the permanent officials in his department, has, indeed, several ways of making things pleasant to an Ambassador in whom he truly delights. Outfits, travelling allowances, secret-service funds, are all nice comfortable things in their way when discreetly managed ; and they are entirely at the disposal of strong-minded public servants who cordially sympathise with each other.

One bold British diplomatist, who was but a modest Envoy in



DIPLOMATISTS IN THE ROMANTIC EAST.

rank, very good-naturedly received a hundred and odd thousand pounds in a few months from the sources above mentioned; and his accounts were enough to make most persons wink, when permitted to look at them. The archives of the Foreign Office are, however, so discreetly preserved, that few indeed were the individuals outside the department who had any occasion for winking at these sublime figures. Another worthy man, who gave highly-respected dinners on returning to his native land, brought 700,000*l.* home with him as the fruit of his prudent negotiations; and this solid addition to our national wealth would have promptly found a peerage, and remained with us in a legislative form to this day, had not its possessor wandered with it into foreign stocks and got lost.

Now if mere Envoys thrive so prodigiously as to become Envoys Extraordinary indeed under favourable conditions, how (ay, how indeed?) may not an Ambassador flourish when properly fostered and sheltered while raising the wind? One of them, who practised the invigorating trade of a pawnbroker during the piping revolutionary times which sent the Imperial house of Bonaparte flitting, got several fine estates into his hands, and a curious collection of house property and jewellery, at extremely moderate prices. He has been highly respected ever since.

The romantic East is still the real gold-field of diplomacy. Very big things indeed are sententiously dropped into the pockets of Ambassadors, who calmly hold them open and—gaze upon the stars, absorbed in contemplation too lofty and ethereal to remark a sound so mundane as the chink of coin. The business is quite religiously contrived when an experienced Ambassador once gets into the knack of it. A large grant of land in a populous city for a church or a cemetery may be converted into hard cash with a piety almost affecting; and a shrill wife has often increased her stock of family diamonds in an altogether surprising way, merely by early knowledge of a Court scandal before it was bruited abroad. In one case a Royal abdication, kept secret, under diplomatic guidance, till the latest moment, gave rise to some very spirited transactions in the regalia; while the treasures of the local church were disposed of at such reduced prices that a Cabinet Minister recouped himself for losses in Canadian railways by a discreet speculation in them.

Of course the resident diplomatists, who were earliest in the secret, made a still more delightful thing of it. Ambassadors have often had cheerful windfalls of this sort in recent years; and the

intelligence of a national bankruptcy, which happened within living memory, was as good as the daily discovery of a gold-mine, as long as it could be kept dark. One fine honest fellow made 200,000*l.* sterling out of it in almost less than no time; thereby demonstrating, in an engaging and pleasant manner, how becoming and nice a thing it is to be a friend of one's Prince.

Persons of quality, with the fine breeding of exalted station about them, do not pass each other money-bags from hand to hand, as vulgar people do; they rather take an opportunity of presenting money's worth to gentlemen and ladies in good society who are of use to them, with the assurance of their perfect consideration. This method of standing in for a valuable thing is altogether more decorous and polite.

Most of our Ambassadors were poor men on starting in life. One of them used to tell how he lived in his gay youth over a pork-butcher's, and dined off a biscuit. After his demise his personal property was estimated for probate as only just under 400,000*l.* None of them have ever been heard of in connection with any money scrape after returning from an embassy. Perhaps it is a law of nature that they are miraculously endowed with large bankers' accounts in their mature years. Perhaps it is the nature of our law so to provide for them. Perhaps of all public men they deserve best of their country, for we are never called upon to hear their speeches, and the true bent of their genius lies in cookery.

II.

AMBASSADORS.

A FEW years ago there were only five of these august creatures going about on the face of the earth as representatives of the majesty of Great Britain. One started in his ennobling life as a lawyer's clerk; one was a Scotchman who married a title; and the other three were titled born. None of them had ever written, done, or said anything remarkable, or they never could have risen to their conspicuous eminence—for promotion came slowly to all of them. Even the Scotchman spent thirty-seven patient years in climbing to the gilded rank of Excellency. The way to promotion was, of course, made easier to the persons of title; but even the



most popular member of the greatest ducal family of the governing Whigs could not do the ambassadorial thing in less than twenty-two years. Indeed, it must be thoroughly well known and understood by all whom it concerns—and their name is legion—that there is nothing in a man before he is honoured with the most

brilliant reward in the public service. Lord Dalling was the last person of real ability who was appointed English Ambassador, and he has had no successor. Indeed, candid politicians in the confidence of Government admit that he would never have obtained such an honour save by a miracle, and never have kept it under any circumstances but for the fortunate chance that he happened to be an invalid, who was nearly always on leave of absence, and who was steadfastly believed to be upon the point of death.

The place of a British Ambassador at a foreign Court would indeed be intolerable to any man of average energy and mature intellect. He has no power of initiative in any business; and his public conduct is absolutely under the control of telegraph wires, which are for ever instructing him, night and day. By his own countrymen he is considered as a peg on which to hook complaints. The courtiers of the country where he resides treat him with civil scorn if he gives himself airs, and as a Jack Pudding if he does not. The Ambassadors of Russia, who are intrusted with real powers, and are commonly the intimate personal friends of their Sovereign, feel an unfeigned contempt for him; and the Ambassadors of other constitutional States regard him as a fellow-actor in the performance of a heavy farce, which has ceased to attract public notice. In truth, the Ambassadors of constitutional States have an uncomfortable sensation that they are all pretending to be what they are not.

The worst of their business is, that even foreign princes and potentates, who used to give our Ambassadors a friendly hand now and then, and help them to go on shamming with their august support, are now frightened out of their wits at the sight of them. Ambassadors such as the first Earl of Malmesbury and the late Earl Granville actually did possess a good deal of Royal and Imperial confidence, which was useful upon occasion. But King Clerk's dishonest trick of printing the private conversations of monarchs in Foreign-Office blue-books, abominably edited, has closed such sources of information; so that a judicious prince, who meets an Ambassador by accident, shuts up his mouth with a snap, as though there were a steel clasp to it.

A deal of envy has been expressed in news-sheets and elsewhere about the preference given to titles over merit in the diplomatic service. Titles, however, make a goodly show in all Courts, while they are still more favoured in Republics. A very small lord looks larger and more important in the esteem of rich and idle societies than a very great philosopher. This fact being indisputable, how-

ever moralists may carp at it, no Minister should be lightly blamed for taking it into account when making his promotions. A lord will do far better for a lay figure than a man of genius or a man of business; and as it is now universally acknowledged that Ambassadors have no rights and no duties, dull empty folk with sounding names can fill, with peculiar decorum, so meaningless an office.

A fat man, in a fright, too, seems to run away from danger



with more haste and anxiety than a large-minded and thoughtful statesman having serious feelings as to his responsibilities and duty towards his fellow-countrymen. It is quite refreshing to remember the alacrity with which his Excellent Plumpness the Right Honourable Bickerton Blemell Lord Lyons removed himself out of harm's way at the public expense during those alarming riots in Paris a few years ago, leaving, with perfect taste and an unruffled temper, the Queen's lieges to take care of their own interests. Nobody missed the noble and energetic gentleman who had rolled so fast away from peril, and who was far more at his ease when beyond danger than while exposed to any possible mischance. Excellency Lyons, his cook, and his quarter's salary, rejoiced in safety and quiet all through a noisy war which convulsed the Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré; and they were a thousand times better situated than that American, Mr. Washburne, who looked after his fellow-countrymen in the besieged metropolis of France, for less than a fourth of the pay awarded to the high-souled Englishman. Indeed, it is a comfort to recollect that our representative, during the whole of the Franco-German war, prudently kept out of all broils but those of his own kitchen, where he and an imaginative cook held sympathetic council together over succulent meats and appetising sauces. Such a man was, and is, an honour to his native land. Let us rejoice in him.

There seems to be no certain rule for mounting to the top-most round on the ladder of British diplomacy. Men as brave and unselfish as Lord Lyons have tumbled off from unexplained causes. Each step is made by the help of patronage, and therefore depends on luck. A perfectly colourless well-behaved nobleman, who has been brought up by an experienced mother, holding a good place behind the scenes of the political stage, will always have a nice chance, if he and his mamma live long enough to make use of their friends and experience. She will teach him to be patient and courteous; never to tread on anybody's toes or heels; never to be eager, or apparently desirous, of promotion; till even rivals and competitors do not hesitate to cry out that his professional advancement has been fairly earned.

When he means to move on he should go, as it were, sideways rather than straightforward. Big posts are best got by jumps in zigzag directions, so as not to do violence to the jog-trot notions of secretaries of legation more than sixty years old, yet full of hope

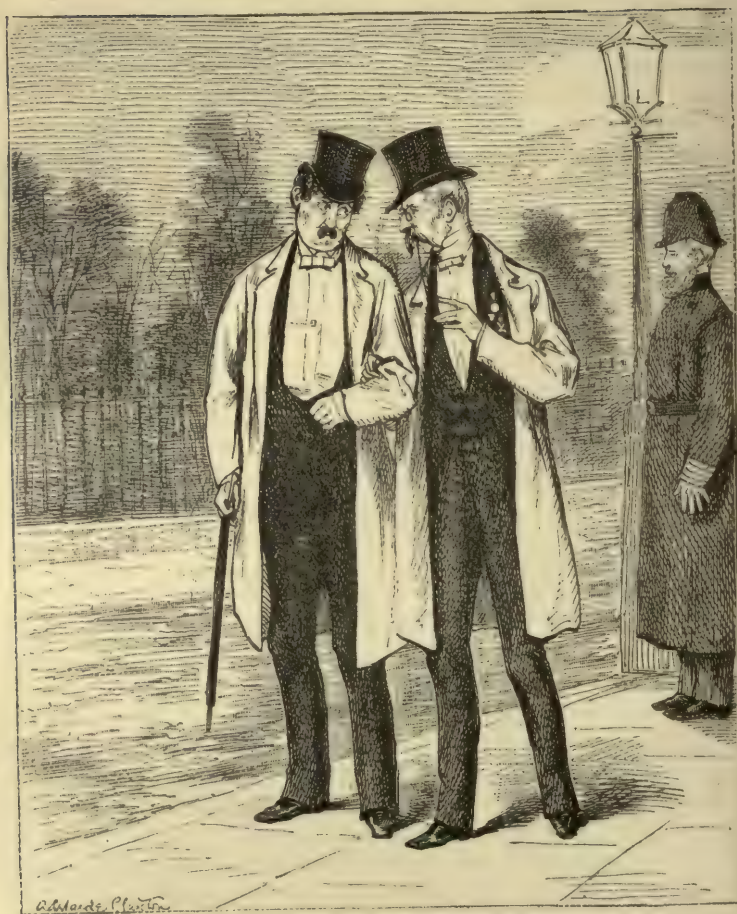
in the remote future. If an aspiring young fellow and his mamma tumble over the heads of some of these old boys, they make an awful hubbub. It is a good plan to pop in and out of the Foreign Office, to get brief spells of special service, to have something to do with a Royal Commission, and yet never to be seen or heard of in a newspaper, unless in connection with an extract from the *London Gazette*.

It used to be said that attachés appointed to the smaller Courts had most luck, but of late Fortune seems to have changed her haunts. The youngest of our Ambassadors, Lord Odo Russell, began his career as a subordinate at Vienna, and ended at Rome. Lord Augustus Loftus passed eight years of his early life in the remarkable retirement of Stuttgart.

There are few Ambassadors on the pension-list, and their retiring allowances are not large, considered as the ultimate end of so much ambition and such vaulting hopes. They are generally lords, however, poor old souls, if that is any consolation to them; and they cost the nation, when lumped together, no more in superannuation doles than half, or maybe a third, of the yearly earnings of a country solicitor in moderate practice. Possibly they really want nothing.

They are great lights at their clubs, these frail and worn-out wrecks and spars of forgotten vessels, freighted with forgotten schemes, that have gone down in the ocean of time. They are in earnest request at christenings and weddings. Their names are thought to look well in the trust-deeds of marriage settlements; they are often fished for, but seldom hooked, by promoters of public companies, for they sink heavily into silent pools, like large tench, as soon as they have carried off the bait held out to them. They may be met in fashionable neighbourhoods during the season, strutting grandly homewards, with feeble knees, from pompous dinners, where they have been honoured guests. Their orders and decorations are firmly sewn on to their dowdy dress-coats by the hands of loving women, who firmly believe that they are the centre of the universe, round whom all other men are in duty bound to revolve. They have small select companies, who admire them fervently once, or even twice, a week, over weakish tea, and who listen to the favourite stories of their youth as to the oracles of a prophet.

Now and again they ask a question in the House of Lords, or propose to ask a question; for experience has long ago taught



them not to be too hasty, lest they should get into some difficulties with the Ministry about their pension, or about some sly old job in hiding, to which they are fondly attached. They spend weeks in preparing this 'question,' till it becomes quite a marvel of antiquated official jargon, utterly incomprehensible to the human intellect. Then if it is a fine day, if Ministers look benign, and the rheumatism permits, they go down with their excited woman-kind to Parliament, and have a field-day all to themselves. They

utter, in a jaunty quivering chirp, a few sentences about the old, old story most familiar to them—the Eastern Question, the designs of France, or the views of Germany towards the sea. Presently they are beckoned and coaxed and petted and whisked away by the



worshipful women in time for their five-o'clock milk. The rest of their evening is passed in revising proofs of the wonderful speech, which has been transmitted in manuscript, through their confi-

dential man-of-all-work, to the editors of the morning papers, 'with Lord Protocol's compliments.' The editors perhaps privately ejaculate 'Bosh!' but print it nevertheless, as in a manner bound by the custom of their craft and country.

Sometimes Ministers, when hard pushed, will even galvanise one of the awful old boys back into real life for half an hour, and call him up to make an authoritative statement, or denial, or warning, or prophecy, in the interests of Government, sending him back with the 'Garter,' or some grand sham of that sort, for his trouble. His name as a politician reads to the general public, at such times, like a quotation from ancient history, producing, as it is intended to produce, a truly grand effect in the way of universal bewilderment.

Such poor counterfeits and shadows as herein described are modern Ambassadors. An embassy still seems sometimes to be what it has often been before—a sort of stately almshouse or retreat for decayed politicians; sometimes also it is a convenient shelf on which to lay a dangerous rival, and make him at once harmless and contemptible. The late noble Marquises of Thormanby and High-down-Derry were both neatly extinguished in this way—the one by a Tory Minister, the other by a Whig, for no party has a monopoly of the tricks of the trade in politics. The only question,

however, which now concerns the sane part of mankind, is whether Ambassadors would, could, or should be something better than they are. If they would be, perhaps they could be; but when a weak-kneed mortal has been for a long time laboriously climbing against wind and weather to the top of a steep hill, he seldom feels

much inclined for heroic exertion. Sleep and a glass of sherry are often more suited to his mind. Probably he takes the sherry before the sleep.

The idea of 'shouldness' or duty suggests quite a different train of thought. An Ambassador who had conceived a thoroughly healthy notion of his position and its proper functions might prove



a very valuable factor in this world of ours. He could hardly do so much as Manchester men suppose for their immediate trade profits, because a commercial traveller, with a pushing disposition and a quick head for figures, can see clearer into small mercantile gains than a ripe statesman. But he might so patiently study the history, manners, circumstances, and government of the country where he is accredited, as to make any misunderstandings about her strength, finances, and resources impossible. Under our present system of patronage and nepotism, an Ambassador was the immediate cause of the Crimean War, of the Franco-German War, and of the Turco-Russian War of 1877; whereas an Ambassador might have prevented all these calamities.

In like manner a few far-sighted reasonable men would have known enough of the resources of Egypt, Turkey, Spain, Greece, and the South American Republics, to warn off rash trust in them, and to have prevented the widespread ruin it occasioned. They would at all times be able to forecast some of the probabilities of the proximate future, and to show where an investment in foreign securities would be prudent or otherwise. Trustworthy and timely information is always beneficent in its effects; and to a wise Ambassador, who made a right use of his opportunities, mankind might often owe the discovery of new wealth, new truths, new forms of happiness. It should be his especial work to discourse with men of science, to follow and examine their experiments, to share, as it were, in their discoveries, and to watch the precious fruit of thought and labour till it became ripe. It is melancholy to think that the first idea of the electric telegraph seems to have died still-born in the mind of a poor mechanic, that many valuable and beautiful arts have perished unpreserved, and that there are still specifics favourable to health and life known to obscure savages and village crones, but unknown to our physicians.

A thousand thousand secrets of Nature remain unrevealed to us for want of intelligent inquiry; and every country has curious mysteries unexamined. Is the ordinary practice of medicine right in France or in England? They are often directly opposed to each other. Which is the best code of criminal law? Nearly every nation has a different one. Why is Chinese agriculture much more productive than ours, while the soil and climate are less favourable? How came it that Macadam imported the art of road-making from Peking, and not Lord Macartney? It had been known

in China for centuries; and Marcartney was there till 1794, whereas Macadam's discovery was not made public till 1819. What are the secrets of colour known to the carpet-makers of Turkestan and to the shawl-weavers of Persia? How do the Arabian jugglers perform their marvels, such as to make a tree grow, blossom, bear, and wither in an hour, and recall dead snakes to life by music? What is the miraculous stone of which Sir Patrick Colquhoun heard tidings at Corfu? What says the horse-whisperer of Aleppo? Is there any virtue in the hazel-rod of the well-finder in Southern Russia? What is the drug which cures all disease, but death, in Tartary? It is administered by an untaught peasant, and nobles, long past physicians' skill, resort to him in numbers, and are cured. He will take no money. Is it true that the mineral wealth of the Ottoman Empire would pay her National Debt a hundred times over?

No Ambassador deals with such questions as these, or is likely to do so, as matters are at present constituted. Suppose we tried a different sort of genius. Not to speak of living men, what an Ambassador Franklin made! What an Ambassador Sir Humphrey Davy would have made! And if we could have persuaded Henry Holland, who was fond of travel, to join him for a year as medical secretary; and Erskine, when he first turned his mind to the law! He would have been glad of the place of first legal attaché, instead of living a rough and tumble life with his wife in barracks at Minorca. What a flash such an intellect would have cast into the darkness and muddle of our legal procedure, with experience so widened and improved—had clerkly meddling permitted! James Watt, too, who had an uphill fight with the world when young, might have made a figure in this sort of diplomacy, just about the time when he was allowed 'by especial favour to establish a small shop in Glasgow.' He and David Brewster would have told us all something of the 'properties of light' worth hearing, and have made together such an embassy as never left the shores of England.

We prefer another mode of doing business. We take a dreary old fellow with a handle to his name, send him to a foreign Court, and pay some clerks to exchange rigmarole with him. Then we dispatch another dull or dullish man, who is to know nothing of that rigmarole, unless called upon temporarily to take the place of the first old man. These two poor creatures are called the Ambassador and the Secretary of Embassy. They are seldom on speaking terms; and employ such mental energy as they have in writing

information,' mutters Ambassador Faddleton, who is a lord, of course, or nearly of course. 'Quite right!' observes Lady Faddleton, in an uncompromising tone; and henceforth Daddleton or Babbleton and the Right Honourable Lord Faddleton sit watching each other, and hatching petty social mischiefs.

The small fry are at it too. The military attaché, who is a general (goodness knows how or why), feels permanently aggrieved because Daddleton or Babbleton takes precedence of him as Secretary of Embassy. The other attachés are jealous of each other. Weedesby is 'my lord's favourite,' and gets all the special service. Beadsby is consul and librarian, which means pickings; and Deedesby sulks twice a week at a tavern dinner with Babbleton or Daddleton, both being in a state of private revolt against things in general. Their conversation is not interesting to other people. Hyejincks, Shycock, and Crasshe, all golden youths belonging to the first families, patronise the local amusements, and call several actresses by their Christian names. 'My lord,' however, smiles at their doings, for he is somehow in the grip of Shycock's father, Sir Underwood Shycock (firm of Shycock, Downey, Dodger, & Co., of Lombard-street); Hyejincks is Lady Faddleton's nephew; Crasshe is Lord Bango's son, and Bango is Secretary of State in command at the Foreign Office. Hyejincks, Shycock, and Crasshe are mostly on leave of absence, save when a new play or a new loan is coming out.

III.

ENVOYS EXTRAORDINARY.

AN EN. EX. and Min. Plen., as he is officially designated in that great work of genius the 'Foreign-Office List,' may be called the ordinarily successful or working man of business in diplomacy. A steady presentable fellow, who goes stolidly in for the thing; who has money, or knows how to make it silently, and give it to the right people, is tolerably certain to become an Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary towards the shady side of middle life. If he is really in the confidence of influential people, and can put the screw on them, he may even jump into a mission at a single bound, though the thing does not often happen nowadays, because



persons who can weigh heavily on Ministers of State employ their power more advantageously: for no place in the diplomatic service, as at present constituted, is worth the attention of a man of energy, talent, and character.

There are a good many active bustling fellows among our Envoys, who are not quite so impeded by dignity as Ambassadors. The best of them, however, seldom find anything to do since the telegraph from Downing-street became so confoundedly communicative. Even the man in Persia, who used only to be worried by a Gholaum, or orthodox official courier, once every ten days, and was never expected to answer a dispatch in less than six months, is now teased among his kabobs and rose-trees whenever any permanent person in charge of the wires feels naughty.

The people at Peking, Yedo, and even Tangier, which a few years ago slept so pleasantly amidst her orange-gardens and happy hunting-grounds, are troubled as sorely. They are perpetually being bothered to give explanations, and to furnish reports, and to answer long lists of printed questions for some unholy compiler of statistics. It would not much signify if the messages were all delivered in a bundle, or rubbish-basket, once a week; for their contents are of no consequence, save that they put the recipient to



a little unnecessary annoyance, and generally to some needless expense. But unfortunately they are left separately at the Minister's house in the small hours, by special favour of the local authorities; and the sleepy diplomatist is often obliged to start up from his slumbers to read them in his nightcap, lest they should contain tidings of import, such as his abrupt dismissal, or promotion, or transfer to another post.

The social position of British Envoys, too, is much altered for the worse in our day. Thus the 'T. G.,' or travelling gentleman, as the fine old British tourist was good-humouredly called at the legations thirty years ago, when he came out with a special passport, a travelling-carriage, and a suite of honour, carried his welcome with him. He was generally a man whose good word was worth having on his return to England, and it was expected that he would bring the latest scandals from the clubs and the cover-side. The 'T. G.,' therefore, had scarcely arrived at his hotel before the Minister's butler, who was rather an august person, brought him a verbal invitation to dinner, which he was expected to answer verbally. He had good cause to brag of that dinner all his life afterwards, and generally did so. The Envoy was a truly splendid and magnificent creature, far above butchers' bills. He kept open house, and not only dined admirably, but his recognition immediately gave the T. G. an entrance into good society. The best political news and the most amusing stories current were to be heard at his table, and every one who was worth seeing or knowing in the country could be met there.

No part of the national taxation was more profitably spent than that which went to keep up the splendid hospitalities of such men as Stuart and Ponsonby, Normandy and Temple. To be on pleasant and easy terms with them was part of a liberal education. Now penny news-sheets and parliamentary riots have awakened tourists to the uncomfortable knowledge that diplomatic salaries are of small account in a banker's book unless eked out by serviceable wits; so the moneyed interests feel rather contempt than respect for a wiggly old boy in a foreign town, who cannot give them half such a good feed as the manager of the branch shoddy-shop, who is flourishing in the most fashionable part of the city, with a brace of friendly cooks, and a music-hall songstress for a wife.

Several Envoys, too, who have scrambled into uncertain places through money-lending attorneys, and have been a good deal fleeced

in the process, are in no haste to discourage an idea which spares them the obstreperous visits and undisciplined appetites of virtuous engineers prowling about with their capitalists, on the look-out for foreign contracts leading straight into the Central Criminal Court. A modern British Envoy, thus overwhelmed by travelling bagmen and cheap excursionists of every denomination, has given up his time-honoured part of entertainer-general to his fellow-countrymen. He is now rather a diner-out than a dinner-giver; and his saucepans often have rest for a week together. Rich local merchants, ambitious people struggling for a place in polite company, thriving



shopkeepers eager to buy manners, are always glad to have a diplomatist in leading-strings if the thing can be accomplished on remunerative terms, and the man is a decent sort of fellow who does not assume too much consequence.

The financiers and large usurers in great cities like Paris, Vienna, Berlin, and St. Petersburg, usually in-

vite their diplomatists in batches, so that one may see all the powers of the earth represented at Herr Schnapsgeldt's Sunday villa. The smaller capitalists, who have made but half a fortune, take them in turns, one or two at a time. They are mostly harmless old fellows, even over their cups; being chiefly remarkable for hair-dye, stiff neckerchiefs, and a steady faculty of digestion. Idleness and small fixed incomes, and freedom from every care but the telegraph, endow them with a regular appetite every day at the usual hour fixed by the social customs of the place where they reside. They become rare judges of other men's wines as they grow in age and wisdom.

The wit and grace, the geniality and good-fellowship, which brightened the missions of Howden and Holland, Ellis, Heytesbury, and Seymour, have died out of the service. Lord Bloomfield was the last of the cheery old school.

IV.

SECRETARIES OF EMBASSY.

MR. JENKINS BATHURST JENKINSON-JENKINSON is a fair average type of a Secretary of Embassy. There is a tradition in his family that one of them was the great-aunt by marriage of a personal friend of the second Earl of Liverpool; and they have all wisely claimed noble lineage ever since. Thus it very naturally happened that when Lord John Bustle, who had a great respect for the peerage, was in power at the Foreign Office in 1852, he appointed Jenkins first paid attaché to the Paris embassy right off.

'The Lord deliver us from this dreadful Whig!' gasped Mr. Hammond, when he saw the nomination lying in wet ink on 'Little-john's' own table. 'Who would have thought that so small a creature had such monstrous notions?' Then it was rumoured that Mr. Addington objected to instruct the chief clerk of the period to make out the appointment of Mr. Jenkinson, it being against all precedent.

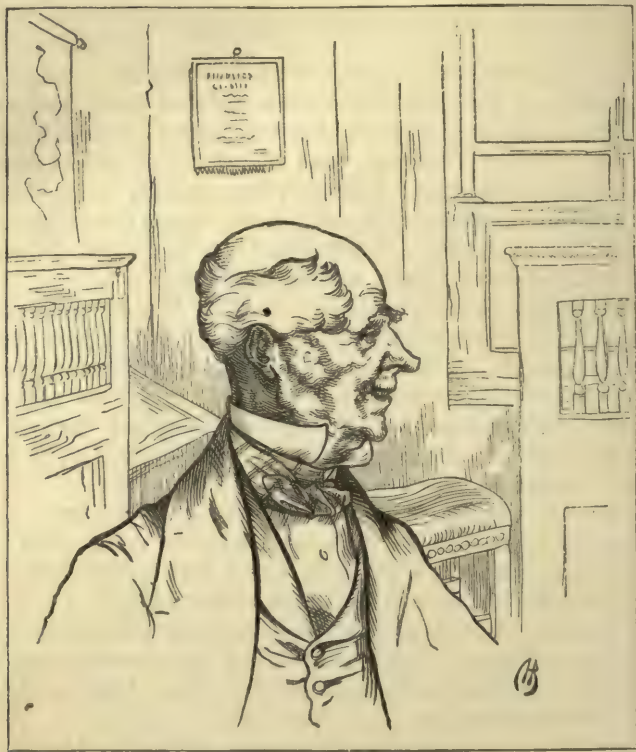
Now, Mr. Addington was at this time permanent Under-Secretary of State, and Mr. Hammond was the senior clerk who governed him, and the chief clerk was a highly respected three-bottle man, who had been at the battle of Waterloo.

Such a combination of official malcontents, and the fact that they had a candidate of their own (bound under conditions to pay an annuity upon his salary to the chief clerk), would have staggered any Secretary of State but Lord John.

'You will witness stranger things than this, Mr. Hammond,' squeaked his lordship, in that highly pitched voice which so long tried the gravity of the Strangers' Gallery in both Houses of Parliament. 'I mean to make myself an Earl, and *you* a Privy Councillor, before long; you see if I don't.'

Indeed, Lord John Bustle carried out both these intentions; but the Office was not to be appeased, and ultimately triumphed even over the godfather of the Reform Bill, so that the chief clerk's customer for promotion had to be appointed after all, instead of Jenkins. That favoured young man did, however, contrive to

wriggle edgeways into the diplomatic service, and was smuggled off to a half-forgotten Court in Northern Germany as soon as the usual negotiations were completed. He did not, upon the whole, come so badly out of the business, for the harmless necessary



THE HARMLESS NECESSARY ATTORNEY

attorney who touted for the Foreign Office agent reported favourably of him, as a discreet young man with a still tongue and his aunt's savings, who was likely to leave his salary for an indefinite period in his agent's hands without asking questions about it. From that time forward, therefore, Jenkins was considered as a safe person, who might be officially mentioned on every change of Government as a 'rattling good fellow, who had been doocidly ill-used by Timbertoes in Lord John's time.' For Timbertoes was the

endearing name by which the Waterloo officer, who had been chief clerk, was familiarly known; and since his decease all the musty peccadilloes of the department have been laid at his door.

Mr. Jenkinson would have got on faster than he did in the service, but he committed two capital blunders at starting. He failed to secure the good graces of his chief's wife, through dancing with and paying too marked attentions to a bankeress, who was her



rival, at the first Court ball given after he took possession of his post; and he committed the unpardonable offence of shirking attendance on her at shopping, for he was but a lad, and inexperienced in the ways of his profession. Sir Phipps Ryder, who was head of the mission, took a grip against him at his wife's bidding, as was natural and proper; so that Jenkins had an uneasy time of it till he could afford to be transferred by the attorney to another post, where his chief was a bachelor.

Here, however, he fell into a trap of a different sort; for, being determined to please the Envoy at any price, he made himself so accommodating, that this diplomatist took himself off from a courtly residence somewhat dull, and left his subordinate to manage the mission business at his own expense. Mr. Jenkinson-Jenkinson's savings were wofully diminished by these proceedings, for he did not dare to touch his salary, even when promoted to the rank of paid attaché, in consequence of further arrangements with the touting attorney, made through a shrewd old uncle. Moreover, when Mr. Townshend Fox-Robinson, his new master, found out to what good service a docile chap like Jenkins could be put, that worthy gentleman did all he could to obstruct his subordinate's professional advancement, for fear that some domineering young nobleman, without a rap, should be sent out to him in place of the mild convenient Jenkinson, whom he had learned so well how to appreciate.

This little game went on for six weary years. Poor Jenkins got a grey hair with the miserable thought that he might be ruined for ever by being forced, in spite of all his sacrifices, to draw upon his official pay in his agent's hands—a course which he had been warned by the touting attorney would ruin his diplomatic prospects for ever. Just as Mr. Jenkinson-Jenkinson, however, was about to sell out his last thousand pounds in the Funds, which was all that remained of the slender fortune he had inherited, honest Lord Malmesbury came into office, and, having an inkling of the Jenkins case, quietly shelved Mr. Townshend Fox-Robinson; after which he transferred the long-suffering attaché to Constantinople, where the whole embassy staff were just then handsomely boarded and lodged by Colonel Rose—afterwards Lord Strathnairn, the famous Indian hero.

At Constantinople Jenkins was lucky enough to obtain employment on special service, which brought him into contact with a



LORD TRUFFLETON HANDING JENKINS HIS APPOINTMENT.

dowager Earl, then cruising about the *Ægean* in his yacht. This illustrious legislator, finding that the aspiring diplomatist could make an omelette of tomatoes better than his own cook, offered him free quarters for ever, in a moment of culinary enthusiasm; and Jenkins might, on the whole, have passed a more useful and agreeable life had he taken service with the amiable voluptuary rather than in the Foreign Office. But he could not be brought to understand so plain a truth till too late.

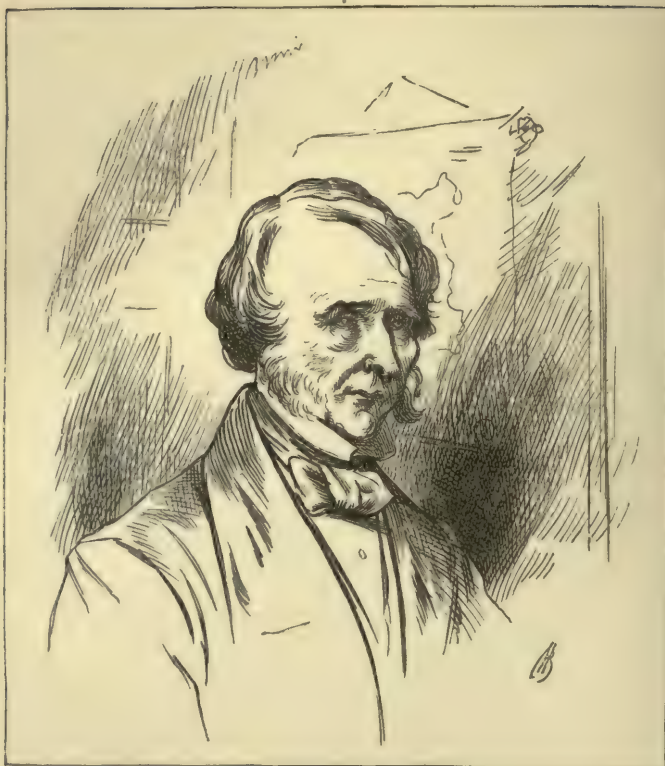
His lordship (Earl Truffleton), however, was not vindictive, and good-naturedly ordered his own confidential solicitor—a prince of the law, who lived in Bolton-street, Piccadilly—to negotiate with his professional brother, the tout, to get another step up the ladder for Jenkins. A fortnight afterwards, which was just the time required for return of post, Truffleton almost took his young friend's breath away by tossing him his appointment as Secretary of Legation in Switzerland, on handing him a basket of fresh eggs to prepare for breakfast.

'Of course,' observed his lordship, 'you can't go to Berne. I never do. I shall want you here in October, when the equinox will drive me home by rail through Trieste. I will get you transferred to Naples by next year. There are excellent tomatoes at Naples. You may run and see your friends while I winter in Paris.'

'How about leave?' asked Jenkins dryly, being somewhat puffed up with his new dignity, even in presence of the patron who had pitched it to him so scornfully.

'Leave!' answered Lord Truffleton, too much astonished to swallow the mouthful of good food he had just taken before speaking. 'Barker, my lawyer, could transport your agent and head man at the F. O. if the dog dared to interfere with my breakfast; and, by George, he should do it, too!'

Mr. Jenkinson-Jenkinson paid marked attention to this powerful peer for the rest of his days; but unfortunately he did not live long, or there is no knowing how high he might and could and would have pushed a young fellow who could handle a frying-pan so deftly, and who so truly pleased his taste. His lordship's conversation was most considerate. 'Much better stop with me altogether, Jumper,' the peer was wont to insist, having given his friend a nickname derived from the accomplished manner in which he tossed the materials for his lordship's favourite breakfast. 'I will give



‘BARKER, MY LAWYER.’

you three hundred a year, damme! and your livery—I mean, my man Davis can make your clothes. Pension too, when you are too old for work.’ It did not occur to Lord Truffleton that he would ever become old.

‘You see, Jumper,’ his lordship would shrewdly observe at other times, when urging Jenkins to enter his employment, ‘I can afford to be liberal. My ancestors did all the thieving and that kind of thing for me, and my family have been honest for two generations. Your present masters, on the contrary, have all their thieving to do, and will flay you alive before they have done with you. My noble friend Furby, though he ought to have money, if he has not been bullied out of it, is worse than any of them. My

place is worth more than anything in the public service—except the F. O. agencies, and you'll never get the tip of your finger into that pie. Come, is it a bargain? No? Ah, you'll think better of it to-morrow.'

That to-morrow never came. Lord Truffleton died quite suddenly, choked by a grapestone, while laughing over one of his own jokes after dinner, at Venice. Jenkins was, of course, in attendance on him, and sincerely expected a legacy; but the kind-hearted Earl could never bear the thought of any one but himself, and naturally departed this life intestate. Immediately after this fact transpired Mr. Jenkins was dryly recalled to his diplomatic duties by telegraph. He never again met with such a friend as Lord Truffleton; but Naples was one of the best posts in the service, till spoiled by Mr. Gladstone, and as soon as Jenkins was Secretary of Legation he now and then got a spell as *Chargé d'Affaires*. Many easy-living English people of influence also resided in the most beautiful of the Italian cities; and Jenkins had opportunities, which he eagerly seized, of rendering them small services, knowing from experience how good a thing it is to be on pleasing terms with the aristocracy.

At length a wealthy Italian Duchess, who had two British and one Wallachian husband, all living, wanted the place of Secretary of Legation, near her own marine villa, for the first attaché, a rosy young fellow, aged twenty-five, whose society she considered unusually edifying. Finally the great agent, Mr. Cribb, finding that Jenkins had honestly kept faith with him, and had already left eight years' pay in his hands untouched since the last accounts between them were settled privately in Truffleton's time, was really disposed to befriend so conscientious a customer. Mr. Jenkinson, therefore, was half-intoxicated, half-alarmed, at receiving, quite unexpectedly, his promotion as Secretary of Embassy at Berlin, which is the dulllest post in the service.

He was exhilarated, because it was a tremendous jump upwards; such a bound as must make him Minister Plenipotentiary *ad int.* very shortly, if he could only keep it during a temporary eclipse of the Ambassador. But he was also alarmed, because the slippery place of Secretary of Embassy is often an awkward stepping-stone to some abominable frying-pan in South America. There was even a horrible tradition of a Secretary of Embassy having been once shipped off as Consul-General somewhere, and that so much against



THE ROSY YOUNG FELLOW'S SOCIETY IS FOUND UNUSUALLY EDIFYING.

his will, that he died of a broken heart. These were grim warnings, and Mr. Jenkinson-Jenkinson henceforth devoted the entire energies of his diplomatic intellect to keeping out of sight and out of mind. The close of his career, like the beginning of it, will depend entirely on chance.

V.

SECRETARIES OF LEGATION.

THE Honourable Peregrine Villiers Timmins is a demure colourless man of forty-three, who never had a friend or a sweetheart, lest either should interfere with his professional prospects; and therefore he is Secretary of Legation at Copenhagen. There is likewise



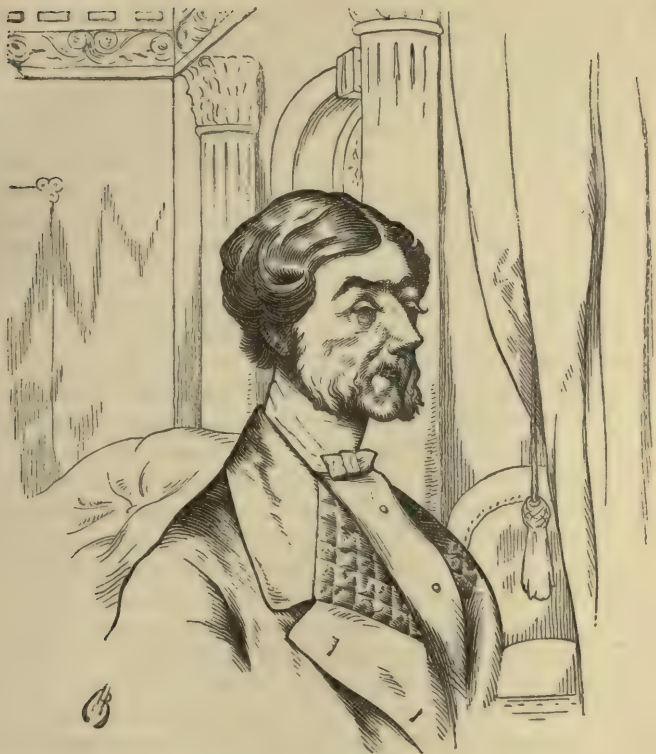
talk of sending him to Yedo, as soon as young Melgund-Stanley can be coaxed or scolded away from Paris, where he is anxious to espouse a lady of gallantry older than his mother.

Hartley and Beaudesert, brilliant Jack Canning, and gifted Philip Goldsworth, who started in life with Timmins twenty years ago, have been all distanced in the race. Lord Fairflower, too,

threw up the service when he came into the family estates after the death of his uncle; and Everhard Bullion, the banker's son, thought he could do better for his firm in Parliament, or with the Prince, than as old Protocol's right-hand man at Vienna. Perhaps he was right, perhaps not; but these and other retirements, jobs, and resignations, which had taken place during a score of years under six Secretaries of State, had gradually cleared the coast for the Honourable Timmins; and therefore he is perched, like one of Mrs. Carey's chickens, half-way up a lighthouse, and never likely to get much higher in this world. He has two sets of shirt-studs, a collection of dress-boots, a doubtful diamond which belonged to his grandmother, and a miscellaneous assembly of clothing from all nations. That, with five hundred a year in salary and four hair-brushes, represents the sum-total of his possessions under the sun; if a pair of rather frightened whiskers and a false tooth can honestly be left out of the calculation.

The mental baggage of Timmins might be stowed away in a wonderfully small compass. He has often read in *Burke* and *Debrett* that he is the fourth son of Conway-Lenox-Montague-Petty-Thynne-Dunk-Fitzroy, Viscount Nocashingmore, of County Tipperary, and nothing has yet occurred to disturb a belief so advantageous to him in society. That is, almost nothing; nothing save an after-dinner conversation which he once had with the present Viscount, when he declined to back his lordship's bill of exchange for a hundred pounds, and was consequently disowned by that august nobleman with much promptitude and asperity. If the truth must be told, the late Viscountess (heiress of Sloe, Twiggs, & Twiggs, the great tea-dealers of Pudding-lane) had separated from her husband very shortly after her marriage, and had allowed him an annuity to let her alone at Florence. But that is an old story now, and need not be recalled.

Besides, it is not, perhaps, all true, for the Honourable Peregrine is often pleased to relate anecdotes of his early life, for the edification of the counts and barons who strut about at the Court where he resides; and from these artless narratives it is clear that Timmins must have passed the greater part of his infancy and youth in circumstances of extraordinary splendour. Most of the continental papers call him 'cet illustre fashionable, Milor Teems,' and stoutly assert that he owes his title to a share he possesses in the *Times* newspaper, which, as all erudite foreigners are aware, is held



by the Lord Mayor of London and his more powerful vassals, upon feudal tenures. Timmins has often found it amusing, and even profitable, tacitly to encourage this belief; so that there prevails an opinion among three French milliners and a German governess established in the Danish metropolis that he is a personage of no small importance. He would think so too, if he did not get so awfully snubbed by his master clerk at the Foreign Office, who is angry with him for not paying tribute with a mind sufficiently zealous and a hand open enough.

In truth, Timmins does not find his salary too much for his own uses, and he will have to struggle all his life with pecuniary embarrassments, as his viscountly namesakes and possible progenitors have done before him. His chief will never budge for a week from

the Danish dominions, so that he cannot get hold of the allowance of three guineas a day which would be granted to him if placed now and then in charge of H.M. Mission.

Then Sir Hookham Backhouse, K.C.B., her Britannic Majesty's Envoy to the King of Denmark, has been saving candle-ends any time these thirty years. He will never ask any one to dinner except on the Queen's birthday, and then the dinner is a bad one. Thus, upon the whole, the position enjoyed by the Honourable Peregrine Timmins, for which he is envied by one-half his contemporaries and despised by the other, is hardly a satisfactory one if fairly examined. The Danish Royal Family would rather he was richer, and that he made things better for trade at Copenhagen. The Danish nobles wonder why he does not entertain them; and the Danish ladies are partly surprised and partly indignant that he never dances with any one who is unmarried, also that he dances somewhat awkwardly, as one whose purse is over-light, while his heels are over-heavy.

The great prize of a Secretaryship of Legation, so coveted by attachés and consuls, is like some other worldly splendours, and will not bear looking at too closely. Timmins got it by a fluke, having been employed to make a shabby sort of secret report for the purpose of whitewashing a man at the Foreign Office who had blundered into a hot-headed scrape from over-bumptiousness. In the end he got the place of the man he had libelled, and brilliant George Beaudesert was hustled out of the public service. The smallest creatures do the work which God appointed for them often quite unconsciously; and Timmins, who may have privately owned to himself that he was a contemptible sort of chap, who had gone back-biting for hire, was merely an instrument in the hands of Providence to teach a great soul patience, and to lead it into higher regions of thought and contemplation than those which are bounded by a despatch-bag.

Timmins got his small reward, such as it was—125*l.* paid quarterly or not, as he happened to be in the good graces of the clerk who governed Lord Furby. Once, when that terrible travelling Countess Mawleý was displeased with him for not capping her courier, 100*l.* was deducted from Timmins's salary all in a lump, but he got over it; and recently there has sprung up a report that he is about to be married to the large Baroness Schochchild (*née* Hedges), one of his mother's kindred, if the thing can be arranged decently.

The Dowager Viscountess works hard at the match every season at Kissingen, even going so far as to pay her son's hotel-bills when he comes down by express train to have his addresses rejected every autumn. Schochchild, however, though an airy creature not more than fifty-seven, is beginning to think that she must settle her 1,200*l.* a year on herself, and marry somebody in time for the next coronation in France. Let us all hope she will select Timmins. They will be an innocent couple, and make quite a sensation in London if the Honourable Peregrine and his Baroness only spend their income on the right people. The capital of 1,200*l.* a year must be at least 24,000*l.*; and that is enough to make a tolerable show for a time, if handled boldly.

Timmins need not care much about settlements, for lawyers can generally contrive to drive a coach-and-six through any marriage contract—that is to say, if the thing has not been done before. But there was an ugly story about in Vienna, that made some people suppose the Schochchild might have paid the debts of a handsome Hungarian Baron Foray with every ducat she could raise upon her jointure; and such a mistake in finance, if it really happened, would be a sad disappointment to Timmins.



VI.

ATTACHÉS.

THERE was an extraordinary scene of rejoicing and excitement in Lord Mereworth's household on the day when my lady's favourite son, handsome Hugh Paladin, was first nominated for an attaché-ship in the diplomatic service of the Earl of Furby. Good luck seemed to follow the brave boy. He had been captain of the Oppidans at Eton, he had taken a double-first at Oxford, and yet was neither a prig nor a pedant, so that he had carried off a fellowship as easily and cheerily as Robert Cecil or Charles Murray. Now again he had been successful, and got a chance in public life for which many smart young fellows would give their ears, if wigs were still worn.

His father, Lord Mereworth, a peer of considerable influence, acknowledged with rather a sad look and hesitating manner, when cross-questioned by his wife, that he had been obliged to try all he knew before he could get the boy's appointment; and that Barker and Bullion-Huckster, the senior partner of a firm where he had been advised to open a deposit account with his Michaelmas rents, had really more to do with the success of his negotiations than either his old friend the Premier, or his brother-in-law, who was Lord-Lieutenant of the county, and had gone up to Downing-street with him to push the thing. Nearly a score of peers too, all of whom liked Mereworth, had even mobbed Lord Furby for him at the Carlton.

Nothing, however, could be done till Barker was consulted, on the advice of old Truffleton. 'Then the business went easily enough,' added my lord dryly; and his wife could get nothing more out of him, nor did she try much, having already obtained all she wanted, and seeing that her Harry, good-natured as he was generally, had determined to go to sleep if pressed too closely. In truth, my lord, who was of a kind and generous nature, did not like to take the gilt off his wife's fine new piece of gingerbread; and as she had made up her mind that the Mereworth family influence, when resolutely exerted, and backed up by all the county, could impose

its own conditions on any Government, he thought it would be churlish to disturb a belief which was but another name for her love and pride of him.

Hugh's mere nomination for an attachéship did not quite settle his business, as it would have done in the gentlemanly old times.



He had to pass rather a stiff examination, and to cram 'a general knowledge' of many things which were not true, and which would have been of no importance to any human being if they had been true. The publisher of 'Ker's Edition, 1862,' of an inaccurate book made something by this process; and so did several Whig printers of dull antiquated volumes, though Lord Furby was a Tory by trade.

Hugh Paladin scrambled through his examination as other hope-

ful and ambitious lads have done before him, looking on the whole thing as quite serious and respectable, poor boy ; for he had been always a good deal at home, and the Mereworths, who were a God-fearing set, never suffered their children to drift away from fireside influences till my lady got that wretched diplomatic craze into her fond head.

Hugh was much changed, however, when he went down to Morlands, the ancestral place of his people, after six months' service on probation at the Foreign Office. He had been employed in the 'Hong-Kong Treaty Port' department, which was Dolly O'Carroll's room ; and Dolly was better known as 'The Noble Cockahoop,' because he had injudiciously traced his descent to the Irish Kings on making his first appearance at the F. O. twenty years before, in a coat cut at Limerick, but which fitted him indifferently. Cockahoop, at first goaded to madness by taunts about his regal birth and conspicuous attire, had long since become one of the best dressed and most unassuming men in the department.

Hugh had hardly been three days in this excellent gentleman's room before he was inducted into all the mysteries of leap-frog, which happened to be the favourite game in the H.K.T.P. department just then ; and ere a single month was out the lad could sit soaking sherry and talking salt scandals with the best of them. The noble Cockahoop pronounced him to be 'a rattling good fellow,' which was the highest praise ever awarded to any officer in her Majesty's service, and was by no means lavishly bestowed. It is as satisfactory a form of laudation as any other ; and what made it more gratifying to Hugh's feelings was the fact that every one, from the permanent Under-Secretary of State and the *précis*-writer down to Mrs. Housekeeper Mary Langeake, indorsed the noble Cockahoop's opinion.

Nevertheless, Lady Mereworth's sweet matronly eyes wore a look somewhat pained and startled when she saw her darling on Christmas Eve under the stately roof-tree of time-honoured Morlands. He had got on the most wonderful trousers ever seen ; his hair, cut in the shoe-brush fashion lately imported from Paris, was not a quarter of an inch long ; and the waxed points of his mustachioes stood out on each side of his face, as though he had just swallowed every bite of two gold mice, except their tails. The boy's handsome curly locks, which were a perpetual delight to her maternal soul, were all clipped away ; and so, as the upper house-

maid sorrowfully remarked, were 'his precious whiskers,' though my lord's own gentleman sulked with her for three Sundays running at church, and would not read out of her prayer-book, because she mourned them.

Hugh did not stay long with his kinsfolk on this occasion. He amazed them by some wonderful costumes, and broke out all over in a surfeit of strange jewellery. Lord Mereworth also observed, with much dry humour, on his advent at the cover-side in a complete suit of white fluff, which had made him look like a performing poodle, and had caused considerable hilarity among the members of the hunt.

'Indeed, sir!' replied the youthful diplomatist, eyeing his father with much coolness; 'poor things, your country families are about here! I pity more than I condemn them. I wore the famous Compiègne uniform. The Empress calls it "*Costume de Polichinelle voué à la Vierge*." The noble Cockahoop, my respected chief, describes the illustrious sporting fraternity to which I have the honour to belong as the "*Holy Iced-Punch Order*."'

The impudent boy would have babbled on as flippantly during the whole of breakfast-time, but that Lord Mereworth's face looked so grave, and his mother said, 'O Hugh!' in rather a scared voice, for these worthy country folk, who seldom left their ancestral woods, had no taste for jokes about religion.

They could not find it in their hearts to scold their boy, however, though his manners chilled and shocked them a little; and my lord got up with a feeling of unusual sadness on the morning when the youngest of his sons was about to leave him. John, the heir, was with his regiment in Ireland; Harry was with the Mediterranean fleet; and Christopher, who was in the Church, never left his parish, for conscientious reasons; so that the old house would seem very dull when Hugh was gone also.

My lord went into his study, hung round with riding-whips and fishing-rods, and where several handsome gun-cases were piled one above the other for autumn service; and he began to whistle with a ruesome countenance. Then he dashed something abruptly from one of his eyes, and took out his cheque-book.

'The boy will have to represent his country now and then,' mused Lord Mereworth, sagaciously. He must have money, and the more he has the better. I can do without an establishment in London this year, and run up by express when there is a close

division. I must ride old Dobbin too another season, though he is getting a little weak in that near fetlock joint.' Puff, puff; and my lord lit a cigar, to muster up courage enough to write a draft in three figures, beginning with the Arabic numeral 5.

'God bless you, my child!' gasped Lady Mereworth hysterically, a few hours later on in the day, when the family travelling carriage was at the hall door. 'God bless you my child!' (kiss, kiss) and then she nestled up to him and gave him her own prayer-book. 'Promise me always to say your prayers, Hugh,' added the noble lady, too proud to let a tear be seen, but weeping inwardly. Then she put the dear kind hand, which had been blessed by hundreds of the poor and helpless, into the breast-pocket of her son's coat, and left there all her savings. They amounted to just 200*l.* in new Bank of England notes—no more, for her ladyship conscientiously did her duty by her husband's dinners. 'There is one from me and—and—and one—from your sister Hester,' whispered my lady in her son's ear, taking her breath rather shortly, but still keeping up appearances with infinite bravery.

'Dearest, dearest Hugh! has mamma told you that I won't "come out" till next year, so that you may eclipse the King and all his Court?' asked a glorious romp of seventeen, who hung on to his left arm, delighted at the sacrifice she had made for her grand brother.

'Time is up!' said my lord, looking at his watch, and making a sign to the outrider, who trotted forward to open the park gates near a farm which had been lately enclosed. Then he thrust the watch into his son's hands, and pushed him into the carriage rather unceremoniously.

'Heaven and earth! what does the boy want with so many boxes?' observed my lord presently, to hide his emotion, when a turn in the road had hidden the carriage. 'A German valet, too, shaved as bald as a pumpkin! What next!'

His wife put her hand upon his mouth, that soft sweet hand which had so lately been busy in Hugh's breast-pocket; his daughter gave him a crisp little kiss on the nose; and thus stifled, silenced, and enchanted by his womenkind, the country gentleman returned to his usual avocations, and acquitted even a poacher almost without parley, he was so happy in the promises of greatness which the future held out to his son. 'Heaven grant that he



HUGH PALADIN LEAVING HOME.

"She put the dear kind hand into the breast pocket of his coat and left there all her savings."

may be an honour to his country,' said the stout baron to his wife as they went to rest that night. 'He is clever and honest, patient and aspiring, in spite of his light talk.'

'He will resemble his ancestor, Sir Frederick Beaufoye, who was at the Congress of Verona, and win an earldom for himself,' answered her ladyship, with perfect confidence.

'Ay,' continued my lord, taking quite the same view of the case; 'to be sure he will. I had never thought of that, my dear.'

So they fell asleep, and enjoyed some dreams of marvellous grandeur all lit up by Love and Hope.

Hugh Paladin was pleased with his place when he got there. He was not precisely 'treated as one of the family,' though the commission of an Attaché formerly enjoined his chief not ungracefully to give the lad something like a home when he first went away from his own people. Sir Bland Badger, his chief, however, who was an old Harrovian, took a fancy to him at once because he quoted Horace without ever making a false quantity; and Lady Badger really liked him because he brought her the first violets of the season, and he had learned from his mother the gentle word and knightly homage which please all worthy womanhood. He might have risen high in the service under able guidance, with such qualities as these. He was well born, well bred, not wanting in worldly knowledge. With but even a modicum of cash prudently invested, a pair of nimble heels, a happy knack of Latin quotation, and a classical master, he would almost certainly have advanced to the foremost and most responsible places in his profession.

But suddenly there was a hushed-up story about him, a story which was carried about in whispers by the Queen's messengers to all the hotels and coffee-houses in Europe. An august lady had been pleased to declare that the newest of the English attachés 'could sing like an angel;' for she had heard him, through the open window of his lodgings, exercising a mellow tenor upon the robber-song in Schiller's *Wallenstein*:

'Frisch auf Cameraden die Rappen gezaümt.'

It had been far better for Hugh if he had never learned German. Henceforth nothing would suit the august personage but that she and Hugh should sing all day long; and the lad's heart went out to her in his songs. No one ever knew whether her heart answered him, but she married another august personage,



LADY BADGER.

and drifted away from him evermore. Possibly Serene Highnesses have no hearts. He seemed lost, somehow, after the stately wedding, in which he was obliged to take part officially. Thenceforth he became incurably addicted to high play and august company, though he never could muster more than 700*l.* a year, as all the world knew, including his fellowship and his mother's pin-money.

He lived an awful dun-hunted life for twenty years or more, with his high-pacing ways and his heart-ache. His profession

seemed to him such a trumpery thing, as indeed it was, when compared with what he had lost, that he threw it up, to wander after the fatal light which always led him farther and farther away into pathless marshes.

Thus one morning, not long ago, some gentlemen, who were reading the newspaper at their club, lazily noticed an announce-



ment stating that when the leaves fall there died 'at Monaco, on the 1st of October, the Honourable Hugh Paladin, fourth son of Frank Fairfax, nineteenth Baron Mereworth.' Also, in another part of the same paper was an advertisement intimating that

‘unless the Honourable Hugh Paladin took away within three weeks from that date a brougham which he had left at Jobling’s livery stables, it would be sold to pay expenses.’

‘By the piper who played before Moses!’ said Lord Truffleton (the present Truffleton, who drives a sky-blue curricie), ‘old Hugh



died game. He went through life on wheels to the last. He had the best-appointed drag at Monaco.’

‘Yes, *two*,’ drawled Lord Protocol. ‘The Empress Helena was at Cannes all the winter.’ Having made this observation, his lordship glanced absently out of the window, which was a way he had when he thought he had made a point in the game of conversation.

VII.

CONSULS-GENERAL.

THERE are several varieties of this parti-coloured species of public servant. But generally he is a disappointed man who has missed his tip, and who resembles neither fish, flesh, nor fowl, nor good red herring. The man who is Consul-General in Morocco, the man who is Consul-General at Yedo, and the man who is Consul-General at Teheran are exceptions to this rule, because they are also Ministers; and there are a few other gentlemen, known to the Foreign Office, who are alleged to be satisfied with their ambiguous condition in life for similar reasons. One of them goes about, indeed, under the odd title of 'Resident in the Persian Gulf,' which is enough to silence the murmurs of any mortal.

The British Consular Service is perhaps the only profession known among mankind in which a Secretary of State can, if so minded, abruptly raise his footman to a rank officially considered as equivalent to that of Rear-Admirals and Major-Generals, with far more than the pay usually enjoyed by these superior officers. The British Consular Service, as might be expected, has suffered accordingly. Persons of character and education do not like to be thrust against their will into offices in which they may be superseded at any moment by a Maltese crimp—an event which happened frequently under the benign administration of Lord Furby; that eminently calm-minded Secretary of State having cautiously divided his best consular patronage between the honest class above mentioned, and any fine high-spirited fellows of his family taken haphazard, so that they were only in want of a salary.

Also many bright dreams and towering ambitions have lately ended in a consulate-general, because Lord Furby finds a natural pleasure in degrading the most eminent of the junior members of the diplomatic service; and they have either to take anything he throws to them, and to submit to his lordship's playful tricks with their emoluments, or give up their professional livelihood altogether. Even a diplomatist does not like to starve in enforced idleness at forty or fifty years of age; and thus many doleful elderly

faces may be seen issuing from the Foreign Office whenever Lord Furby returns to power in the usual course of events parliamentary.

Those dejected old fellows were once men of mark and fair prospects, who, maybe, have served their country, not without distinction, at half a dozen capitals, from the petty Residenzstadt of some German kingling to Teheran, the most splendid Court of the East now left upstanding. Nevertheless Lord Furby has metamorphosed them by discreet methods into Consuls-General; and they would use their commissions as waste paper if they were not unable to keep up their life-assurances without a salary of some sort, after they have spent all their private property during some score years of deferred hope, ending thus. 'Ay, ending,' they growl bitterly, 'in abject dependence on the mercy of a light-fingered lunatic.'

There is another sort of Consul-General, though he is rather scarce. Herr von Geldermann and Baron von Schnapwitz, for instance, have a perfectly well-founded belief that the titular distinction of British Consul-General has a business value for them, and they profess this creed in common with reflective commercial men of all nations. They have a notion that their goods and persons would be protected by the British flag in case of civil wars or foreign invasions; and consular rank gives them not only a social position, but several important privileges mentioned in elaborate works by Miruss, Bynkershoek, and other eminent writers on international law—privileges only encumbered by the condition that they shall be never used.

Finally, there is the orthodox old Consul-General, who was private secretary to Mr. De Mortmagne (of the great divorce case) from 1841 to 1845, and who has gradually writhed and crawled his way upwards till all his hair has come off with the exertion. He is still secretly frightened with the memories of it. This kind of Consul-General believes that his post in some African or South American mud village is the true centre of the universe. He is commonly a highly respected old donkey, who walks about in the undress uniform of the consular service, with a formidable band of gold-lace round his cap. Thus accoutred, and inflated with the pride and pomp of office, he looks like the steward of a Channel mail-boat in a gale of wind; expecting that all within hail will do him obedience, as all may have need of his services.

His discourse in private life, and at its best, chiefly refers to the



high price of vegetables, and to the changes which have occurred in the seasons since he was a boy. Sometimes, however, he dilates with extreme unction on the forgotten naughtinesses of a bygone generation, bringing forth the shadows of rakes and demireps from their unhonoured tombs, and seeming to like to tell how they drank and revelled, as though their poor grimaces and antiquated debauchery were the choicest part of history. This variety of Consul-General frequently wears a wig like the majestic wigs of George IV.; and rejoices with all his servile soul in the idea that he personally resembles the fat and heartless old King. His talk

over his bottle, when in this vein of obstreperous loyalty, is not edifying; and a travelling clergyman is sometimes startled to hear his country's official representative volunteer to give imitations of the manner in which all the Royal Dukes were used to swear in the early part of the present century. In truth, the Consul-General was, perhaps, a notable character himself in a small way, and on the back-stairs of fashionable life; so that he may have had many opportunities of hearing and seeing how the great of the earth disported themselves in the presence of their inferiors.

When he dies he will possibly bequeath about thirty thousand pounds, more or less, for probate duty, to some influential clerk in the Foreign Office; and also leave behind him a sealed packet of those explosive letters in the great divorce case to the Minister's sister, who was concerned in it. For those letters got him his place, and materially helped, with the influence of his heir the clerk, to keep it. There is a rude sense of dog-like fidelity to his old masters at the bottom of the vain old fellow's heart, after all; but he disowns his family because they are shoemakers at Brighton, and it is a heavy sorrow to him that he was not named after the late Bishop of Osnaburg of blessed memory.



VIII.

CONSULS.

LORD PALMERSTON, in his most offhand way, disposed of the social claims of Consuls when he told the House of Commons that they were '*not gentlemen.*' They are, indeed, the strangest set of

people ever got together in the same profession. Large families of aliens are imported wholesale, from time to time, into the consular service; and not long ago an exceedingly disreputable company of persons, all closely related by birth or marriage, held every post on the sea-line of communication between Malta and Trebizond, extending therefrom again through Erzeroum to Tabreez and Teheran. In like manner, a family of attorneys, named Wilkins, did some quite amazing things with the British consular service in the United States of America. Nevertheless, the nobility is not altogether unrepresented in this branch of the public accounts. The family of one Scotch Earl alone have considerably taken possession of two consulates-general and two consulates, even carrying their patriotic condescension so far as to accept a vice-consulate.

As a rule, however, the consulate service has been wisely looked upon by successive Secretaries of State as a method of pensioning off those claimants and dependants, of both sexes, who have gradually gathered round them during an agitated political life. Intelligent couriers, the sons of valued stewards, valets, and cooks; convenient witnesses in perplexing law-suits; the husbands of enterprising ladies; with a free sprinkling of active-minded persons out at elbows and on the press, used to form the staple of the consular service.

The best sort of Consul still known is the retired naval officer, of the class often appointed formerly by Lord Aberdeen and his immediate successors. This Consul is a cheery, hospitable, straightforward old fellow, with stout bandy legs, good weather eye, and no nonsense about him. His consular salary and his half-pay as a Commander R.N. carry him cosily on to quarter-day in the style that he lives; for he does his marketing himself, and drinks nothing but cold grog without sugar. A very notable type of official is this rare species of Consul, and welcome as healthy weather in the house of every British subject throughout his district. He is still occasionally to be found in the Spanish seas and elsewhere; but has been almost elbowed out of the service, by Lord Furby's lot, since 1866.

One of the last of them was Jack Fowler, who married an English housemaid when he went home on leave for the last time, and lived in great dignity and honour ever afterwards. They had no children; but she was a great hand at a sea-pie when she had once learned to make it, and she taught her Greek cook to roast

quails to perfection. Travellers who touched at Rhodes on their way to Jericho during this bonny housemaid's reign at her Majesty's consulate had many causes to rejoice; and she was one of them. A rosy-cheeked, free-hearted lady, with a voice somewhat breezy and shrill, was this Consulesse; but she did not rule too visibly over her husband and his guests when they were governable by unseen methods. It was her favourite practice to appear after dinner, when her housewifely duties were well ended, and sing a song of her childhood with exquisite archness and spirit. It began and ended, after many intermediate musical verses, something in this manner:—

SONG OF THE CONSULESS AT RHODES.

'O foff! siz the straingur,
O foff! an daway,
An daway flew his lie dark
Till the silver of day.'

A pilgrim going to Jerusalem for the Greek Easter, and forced by stress of weather to put in at Rhodes, was so pleased with this melodious lyric, that he sought and obtained permission to copy it from the Consulesse's own dictation. Neither he nor she, however, was able to discover the language in which it had been composed, till the editor of *Notes and Queries* was referred to, and after deep study arrived at the conclusion that the text might be restored into that of a famous old English ballad.

Poor Jack Fowler's first fit was brought on by Lady Jemima Heyday turning up her nose at this song on a hot July evening. That lady and her husband thought it due to their dignity to be rude to their inferiors, because he was a Frankfort lottery-loan man, who had changed his name from Heideck on becoming a member of the British aristocracy, and she was the eldest daughter of a baron, who had often marched against his creditors into the impregnable fortresses of the Court of Bankruptcy. Jack might have recovered the blow to his consular dignity and uxorial tenderness; but a few days afterwards Lord Pedlington, the powerful banker, whose junior partner was First Lord of the Admiralty, sent off his scullion to buy a 'few coals of the Consul,' and evidently thought him a kind of bumboat man, nominated by Government for the special behoof of the Yacht Squadron.

Jack never held his head up after that, because he fell a good deal in the esteem of his buxom consort, the housemaid. She had



THE CONSULESS OF RHODES'S SONG.



LORD PEDLINGTON'S SCULLION COMES TO BUY A FEW COALS.

previously considered her 'Cauensle,' as she proudly called him, the representative of our sovereign lady the Queen, seeing that he fired off a gun every day in his kitchen-garden before sitting down to dinner, which, she had been assured, was a Royal custom at meal-time. Now she felt that her self-esteem had had a fall.

She need not have been so down-hearted. There were Consuls, such as Rawlinson at Bagdad and Rose at Beyrout, who wielded more power than many kings. A man who held even a Vice-Consulate at Cos was seriously called 'Charlemagne' by his neighbours because of his loftiness. At Aleppo there was a Consul who dressed like a Turk, wore a long beard, and went by the tremendous name of 'The Supreme Being.' His father was one Bowker, who had done something wrong for a Duke of Cumberland.

Indeed, the good-natured Consules of Rhodes got back some of her former respect for her husband's rank when she went on a visit to a Consul at Broussa, who marched every day to his roast mutton to the sound of martial music, played by his entire family, and solemnly served himself first at his own table in honour of his regal character. Jack, however, only murmured, 'Coals, Sarah Jane; only think of that! and the blanked landlubber sent us twenty Turkish piastres to pay for them, with a message that he did not want any change.'

Jack could not reconcile his dignity to that part of the story. He had never been offered a tip since he wore the Queen's uniform till he became a Consul; and he vowed he would have sent in his resignation, but that, on looking down the list of his colleagues, he saw the names of Burton, Playfair, Mansfield, Drummond-Hay, Churchill, and Sandwith—names which can only be mentioned with respect and honour.

IX.

VICE-CONSULS.

THE commissions of Consuls-General empower them to appoint Vice-Consuls, and their general instructions enjoin them to do so whenever there is a necessity for such appointments in the interests of British trade or shipping. In practice, however, they are never allowed to make such appointments, because a vice-consulate has been lately considered by the prudent and eminently judicious-minded Secretary of State who so long administered the Foreign Office as a thing of value, to be promptly snapped up and applied to his own use. A vice-consulate in honest hands indeed is a very small thing, being sometimes worth no more than 50*l.* a year, as at Toulon. Very often the post is not paid at all.

A sharp person, however, untroubled by scruples, can always make a cheerful occupation of it. He may graft on to it a flourishing business as a money-changer, an hotel-tout, a guide to the neighbouring antiquities, a ship-chandler, a sailors' lodging-house keeper. He can take part in various courageous and honest enterprises, which will seldom leave him with an empty pocket; for he

can always make matters more or less unpleasant to seafaring men who object to deal with him. The commonest sort of Vice-Consul is therefore a keen-eyed agile creature, who is ever on the watch for small profits of all kinds, and who makes them with astonishing energy and perseverance, till he develops into a local notable, and contrives to get his son or his nephew appointed in his stead.

He can often lend money to the Consul, and therefore keeps his chief well under his thumb. He collects the fees and keeps the fee-books, takes charge of seamen's wages, so that all the pickings and perquisites of consular business fall to him. His intelligence is commonly composed in equal parts of shrewdness and greed. He may be recognised in most ports by the irrepressible gold-laced cap of his order, and by the suspicious looks of the shipmasters who speak to him on business. His method of dealing with their affairs, however, is more simple than one would suppose, and it is always the same. He merely gives them recommendations to the sea-lawyer, whose bills of costs he is ready to certify, and with whom he is privately in partnership.

The Vice-Consul's trade is a good one, because there is no check on the taxes extorted from shipowners in our days. Then the sensible practice of making the Consul a notary, and holding him responsible for the fees he levied, was abolished at the instance of a late Assistant Under-Secretary of State, who had his own reasons for most of the things he did. The result is that British Consuls have now no interest in transacting the notarial business of shipmasters at reasonable prices fixed by law, and whenever they can they shirk having anything to do with it. The merchant-captain may thus be coolly handed over, with his cargo and ship, to a waterside rogue, who goes halves with the Vice-Consul in anything that can be coaxed or bullied out of him.

It is quite refreshing to see the puzzled aspect of the master of a Newcastle collier, with the sharp Vice-Consul on one side of him and the sea-lawyer on the other. The shipmaster need not indeed trouble himself much about the matter. It is the shipowner who pays; and it sometimes happens that if Captain Drinkard, of the *Black-eyed Susan*, has run up too large a bill for grog and smiles at the Vice-Consul's lodging-house, he can merge his account in the sea-lawyer's bill, and the Vice-Consul will certify that it is all right. The money can easily be raised by bottomry bonds, and all three are thus made happy.



THE PERPLEXED COLLIER CAPTAIN.

The Consul or Consul-General, as the case may be, dare not complain of the lucrative transactions of his Vice-Consul. Just in accordance with the extent and success of them is the Vice-Consul certain to have potent friends among the attorneys and capitalists who manage Lord Furby, and do perpetual honour to that cool safe judgment and to that admirable statesmanship which have edified so many millions of newspaper readers in this great country.

There is also another species of Vice-Consul, who may be most accurately described as 'The Foreign-Office Dodger.' When a Secretary of State has notoriously had a relation of such a sort that his name is too well known to be submitted to the Queen for any important appointment, without a little circumlocution, that interesting individual may count upon a vice-consulate such as will not even bring him into hostile collision with the Civil Service Commissioners. He may reside at Dresden, at Naples, or in Rome—in short, anywhere he pleases, so that he does not come to England, and the Examiners will leave him at peace. He will also be exempted from any investigation into his capacities as soon as it is convenient to provide him with a Royal commission; and the Secretary of State may thus have things all his own way, under a snug Order in Council, dated June 4th, 1870.

Accordingly, the Foreign-Office Dodger, who has a calm and judicious patron, such as Lord Furby, may be briskly moved from post to post without ever being required actually to perform any duty at all. Every move, however, will entitle him to an outfit, and his lordship gave no less than ten of these handsome gratuities to one fortunate fellow. By-and-by—all in good time, or before—say, for instance, in four or five years, varied by profitable incidents of travel—'the Foreign-Office Dodger' blooms brightly out upon the world as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, with a salary of 4,000*l.* a year—and a step or two in another profession, say the Army or Navy, just to keep our soldiers and sailors in good heart about the distribution of public honours and rewards.

Many neat things are done, too, in the special-service way, for this class of Vice-Consul, who is not so common as he should be, though there are several fine specimens of him just now in the service.

X.

QUEEN'S MESSENGERS.

ONE of the pleasantest trades going, thirty years ago, was that of a Queen's Messenger, and people who dealt in such things got as much as seven thousand pounds for the appointment. The salary of the place was rather vague, but its emoluments were con-

siderable, and the Messengers travelled over Europe in well-appointed carriages of their own. Railways put a stop to this, and materially diminished, not only the profits, but the personal consequence of Queen's Messengers, who came henceforth to be confused with the crowd of ordinary first-class passengers by express



THE AMBASSADORIAL GATEKEEPER CHIVIED BY A QUEEN'S MESSENGER.

trains. Then a more precise figure was made to represent their pay, and at last a reforming Secretary of State—who was, by the way, a Tory—abolished their perquisites.

Now Queen's Messengers are a humdrum company of orthodox persons. Some of the porters of the more distant embassies, however, could tell strange tales of their predecessors. One had such an exalted idea of his rank in life that, when Lord Ponsonby's gatekeeper at Vienna came out at midnight in his night-gear to receive the Messenger's dispatches, the Messenger chivied him half-naked down the street, for want of respect in not putting on his livery. Another Messenger, being stopped in Prussia for want of post-horses, rode forward upon a cow, till he met a Prussian officer, whom he knocked off his charger and took possession of it. He was forbidden ever again to put foot in the country, but was ultimately begged off punishment by diplomatic methods. All these honest gentlemen led exciting lives, full of adventure, and became general repositories of good stories and miscellaneous facts about all countries.

The crook in their lot was that the Foreign Office clerks crowded over them, and that, though they had a high opinion of themselves, their social position was not distinctly recognised. There seems to have been something shocking to the ears of gentlemen in the name of Messenger, though their duties, rightly considered, were scarcely beneath the attention of a rising statesman or an ambitious scholar. Men of rank and talent submitted without a murmur to be shelved in the pompous tedium of a petty Court; but a client of Grenville or of Fox would have felt insulted had it been proposed to him to obtain a practical view of the government and institutions of many countries, in an inferior position.

As Queen's Messengers are entitled to the promptest means of proceeding on their way, their baggage is exempt from search, and used in the good old times to be filled with international presents from great people. French bonnets, Brussels lace, and miscellaneous fashions choked their portmanteaus, carpet bags, and hat-cases, till there was a custom-house riot about one of them, who brought over sixteen thousand pounds' worth of shawls from Turkey for commercial purposes. Now a Queen's Messenger can only demand that the Government seal on his despatch-bags shall be respected. The rest of his luggage is open to inspection. Still a dispatch-bag may be made to hold a good deal, and often does so.

As to the political use of Queen's Messengers, much may be said on both sides. They sometimes afford a convenient means of gaining time, when an Ambassador or his Government are in doubt as to the course they should take, and would like to see affairs ripen before they touch them again. In that case they are dispatched with a general printing of paragraphs in evening papers, relating to the importance of their errand. At other times their bags are mostly full of love-letters, Foreign Office jokes, tradesmen's bills, and culinary delicacies.

To a cursory observer it has sometimes appeared that Ambassadors are more fond of fuss and importance than desirous to incur the expense of them; and in connection with this subject it has been remarked that, under a Government who pay their representatives a fixed allowance for couriers, most of the communications sent by their Excellencies go through the common post. When the taste for mystery and hocuspocus can be indulged free of cost to the Ambassador, he seems willing to gratify it; but when anything is to be gained by dispensing with these things, no more Messengers or special trains are required. Mystery in the abstract is, of course, a fine thing.

Perhaps it is also a profitable thing. A story got abroad, not long ago, of some mysterious gentlemen who carried on a funny little game, in which Queen's Messengers, cipher dispatches, and a foreign loan were all unaccountably mixed up together. A foreign state was about to repudiate its liabilities, and timely notice of the fact was thus opportunely brought to the knowledge of a favoured few. I am bound to say I have formed my own opinion of diplomatic mysteries in consequence of this and similar transactions ever growing more frequent. I apprehend that they sometimes supply a very lucrative business, and have a brisk sale. A lady has just made twenty thousand pounds by one diplomatic secret, and she has dealt regularly in them for many years. She is, of course, a fascinating lady. Some 'mysterious gentlemen are in correspondence with newspapers on remunerative terms, and sell the best items in the Messengers' bags by retail. There are quite a company of them thus engaged—a company, too, with very limited liability.

Another of the causes of diplomatic secrecy and sealed dispatch-bags is that a whole set of people in authority are sometimes frightened and ashamed of the mess they have got into. The

most touching little incident of this kind is a well-known European scandal, relating to a family of diplomatists who had *all* borrowed money of a certain stock-jobber. The secret affairs of their Embassy were most religiously kept. The riddle of the Sphinx, the secret rites of forgotten religions, were easy guessing to the wondrous things which might, could, or should have been concocted behind the impenetrable veil which shrouded the proceedings of these diplomatists. They had only confidence in one man on earth, and he was the stock-jobber. So a more thriving and mysterious set of fellows never blundered on together in the dark, made wild mischief, as was seen too late, and now sneer at all ill-conditioned people who presume to blame them.

I am sorry to refer to these circumstances ; but the misfortune is that if one makes a general charge without particulars, an indignant army of expectant younger sons cry out, 'Where are your proofs?' If you adduce plain, notorious, indisputable facts, the same set of exasperating dunces change their note, and exclaim, 'Oh, the libeller! Oh, the calumniator!' till well-meaning writers, who wish to point out a shocking abuse, really do not know how to state it so as to please them.

A curious illustration of the manner in which diplomatic secrets are kept occurred some years ago, under circumstances where no direct pecuniary interest is presumably in question. One morning a startling communication appeared in the *Daily News*, a paper with which I had been officially forbidden to have any connection. Nevertheless, the article was attributed to me by the Foreign Office, and my friends were aghast at the indignation expressed against me. To hustle me out of the service without even a preliminary inquiry was thought too mild a punishment, and as I had an active enemy among the upper clerks, a decree was passed that I should be 'crucified.' To crucify a man was the departmental word for badgering him till he was forced to resign his commission. I had, however, an ally in the enemy's camp, who told me what had happened, and that 'traps' were about to be set for me in consequence. Twenty-four hours afterwards I had the original draft of the *Daily News* article in my hands. It was written by the Ambassador's private secretary, with marginal notes by his Excellency, and it had been sent in the Messenger's bag. This document having been shown to the Secretary of State then in charge of Foreign Affairs, the case was hushed up, and I heard no more of it. I should hardly

have got out of the scrape but for the Ambassador's imprudence; but he had a habit of carelessly tearing up his waste papers and tossing them into a basket, instead of fitting up a regular 'burning-room' for the purpose, such as they have at the F. O.

One word more about Queen's Messengers before this brief notice of them comes to an end. The bearer of important tidings is sometimes recompensed with immediate promotion, especially if he have suffered from danger and difficulty upon his journey; and an officer who brings home news of peace receives 500*l.* in accordance with immemorial custom. For English Queen's Messengers, and for them only, is neither reward nor promotion for good services, however arduous. Two have received no mark of official favour since 1843; one has been in the same position since 1852. Thirty-seven years of hard work gain no recognition whatever. Not a single Messenger now on the staff enjoys even an honorary distinction of any sort. A set of as fine, frank, enterprising, quick-witted gentlemen as ever wore boots are condemned all their lives to remain in a false and subordinate position; to be hectored by rude clerks, and to feel that the best-directed energy and the most devoted attention to their duties are useless to them. A happy thought, which would make the professional fortune of a foreign officer employed on such a service, is sneered down or pigeon-holed in Downing-street with supercilious arrogance, and men who might be employed with singular advantage to the country are converted into mere postmen. Now we have certainly several gentlemen among our Queen's Messengers who possess great ability, and who are keen observers, whose experience, touching the state of countries through which they are constantly travelling, might be of great value in time of need. They are men of infinite resource, courage, and judgment, yet we obstinately refuse to credit them with any higher quality than a stout constitution, and leave their minds to grow sour with discontent. Once a Messenger, always a Messenger, whose attempt to rise higher is a theme for clerkly impertinence and dogged opposition.

XI.

INTERPRETERS.

INTERPRETERS are now employed for the most part only in embassies out of Europe. Their duty is to translate official documents, and to interpret the conversation of their chiefs at official interviews. The Interpreters employed by the Turkish Government in their negotiations with Ambassadors accredited to the Porte were in former times usually functionaries of very high rank. They were nearly always Greeks, and they soon contrived to get the entire business of foreign affairs into their hands. It was from them that the hospodars of the rich provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia were almost constantly chosen. Since the outbreak of the Greek revolution, however, the Greeks have lost much of their power and influence at the Porte.

The duties of Interpreter require the utmost honesty and delicacy. The Porte was quite right in giving her Interpreters distinguished rank and emoluments. A sound negotiator is not always a clever linguist, and he must therefore employ somebody who is; that somebody must be thoroughly trustworthy, for he will often have it in his power to make or mar the objects of his chief. The Interpreters of the embassies at Constantinople have higher salaries than the secretaries of embassy and legation; still they are not beyond temptation; they do not form part of the Diplomatic Corps, as they ought to do; their position in society is not recognised; they are not looked upon as gentlemen. This is a very serious mistake, for they have literally all the business of the embassies in their hands; they are the official messengers between the Porte and the embassies; they are the real ambassadors; all depends on their tact, prudence, and ability.

On ordinary occasions it is useless for an Ambassador to make a long, solemn, pompous visit to a person who cannot understand a word he says. Therefore he sends a dragoman, who is received without fuss or ceremony; states his mission simply, without forms or absurdities, and sometimes gets a plain and satisfactory answer. I am afraid in my time there were not half-a-dozen dragomans

who could interpret correctly the most trifling official document. The muddle into which affairs must get where they are singularly important and complicated, and yet are clearly understood by no party concerned, is better imagined than described. In short, the whole race of diplomatic interpreters are a weary lot, and it would only raise an outcry to speak of them as they deserve. It would do no good whatever. Sir Alfred Sandison at Constantinople is doubtless a good Turkish scholar, and he is Oriental Secretary, but he cannot do all the business of the embassy; and I see the six student dragomans were all appointed on the same day (25th Oct., 1877).

Mr. Goschen must have got into odd perplexities with such a staff, and the Turkish authorities must have been quite unable to comprehend his language or his wishes. Lord Palmerston long ago wished to remedy this absurd state of things, and applied to the Vice-Chancellors of Oxford and Cambridge to recommend him the two most promising scholars they could find. Then this is what happened. The Dons both recommended their personal friends,



looking upon the chance of doing so as a snug piece of patronage not to be thrown away. One of the persons recommended was a marquis, the other the son of a viscount, and both felt aggrieved that they were not considered as regular members of the Diplomatic Corps. Also they were left out in the cold too long, they received no promotion, and were seldom employed; so that they got sick of their business, and the whole scheme broke down.

Lord Stratford de Redcliffe habitually employed Levantines, and quarrelled with them; but the Levantines were too much for him, and his pitched battle with his chief dragoman, Stephen Pisani, helped more than a little to upset him. Lord Dalling had his own ways of getting at facts, and knew the Turks well. Sir H. Layard, too, was not wholly without means of making himself understood. But if any one really wishes to know how and why the Eastern Question has got into such a hopeless muddle, he has only to ask himself what satisfactory outcome could possibly issue from the negotiations of people who habitually talk gibberish to each other.

XII.

AMBASSADRESSES.

THE whole of an Ambassador's family, and especially his wife, are peculiarly under the protection of the State in which he resides. It is not, however, altogether correct to say that the family of an Ambassador share all the privileges of his rank and office; for his children and any relations who may reside with him are merely treated as foreigners of similar condition. The custom of Courts has, by degrees, made an exception in favour of an Ambassador's wife, to whom special honours are sometimes accorded; but even in her case they have been frequently disputed. Grotius, who was himself Ambassador to the punctilious Court of France, makes no mention whatever of the wives of Ambassadors, though he must have been well aware of any honours due to his wife, who accompanied him. The position of Ambassador's wives, therefore, appears to be very much like that of the wives of Scotch Lords of Session, and James I. decided their legal rank. 'I,' observed the

pedant King, in one of his lucid intervals between quoting Latin and slobbering his courtiers, 'made the carles lords; but who made the carlines ladies?'

In former times, he who was sent upon an embassy usually left his wife at home; but when, during the seventeenth century, permanent embassies came into fashion, Ambassadors' wives remonstrated with such energy and perseverance, that they were ever afterwards allowed to follow their husbands, and by all means to take their tongues with them. Then first was heard the title of Ambadress, with which these ladies bedecked and ornamented themselves. Nevertheless, a French Envoy at the Hague, a profane single man, who had paid no attention to the important revolution going on in the diplomatic world, shrugged his bachelor shoulders at the arrival of a Spanish Ambassador's wife, and immediately wrote home to his Government, 'Que c'était une Ambassade hermaphrodite,' a jest which delighted the French Court vastly.

Italy has the honour of having given a title to Ambassadors' wives, and Sixtus V. is the love of a Pope who confirmed it. The new dignity is said to have been invented as a peculiar mark of courtesy towards Count Olivarez (a judicious statesman who flourished under female rule), and who was then Spanish Ambassador at the Vatican. This Count, father of the still more famous Minister of Philip IV. (immortalised in *Gil Blas*), instantly seized upon the opportunity of giving a banquet to the Roman ladies; and it is needless to add that Spanish interests at once became popular, for irresistible voices were advocating them all day long, and possibly part of the night, for ever afterwards during that generation.

The Pope was by no means a potentate accustomed to do things by halves. Having once conferred the title of Ambadress upon the Countess Olivarez, he determined that she should forthwith enjoy all the advantages of her exalted rank. He permitted her to kiss his toe; and the nieces of all the Cardinals remarked, with pardonable envy, that his Holiness received her on this auspicious occasion with the ceremony due to a Royal Princess. Henceforth her rank was fully acknowledged, and she began immediately to quarrel for precedence with the princesses of Colonna and Orsini, so that no one could ever venture to invite them to the same house together.

Meantime it soon became apparent to the Pope that, since he

had granted a brand-new handle to the name of the Spanish Ambassador's wife, he must concede the same advantages to the wives of other Ambassadors, or prepare to leave the Vatican, as the only means left him of escaping from their anger. To any person who has enjoyed favourable opportunities of becoming acquainted with the vigorous proceedings of a band of ladies, all of one mind on some particular subject affecting themselves, it will not be a matter of surprise that the Pope submitted without venturing on a parley. He was painfully aware that negotiations must have added to his humiliation, and thenceforth the wives of all Ambassadors have held their own. Woe to those who do not religiously bow down before a title bestowed by a Pope and worn by a lady!

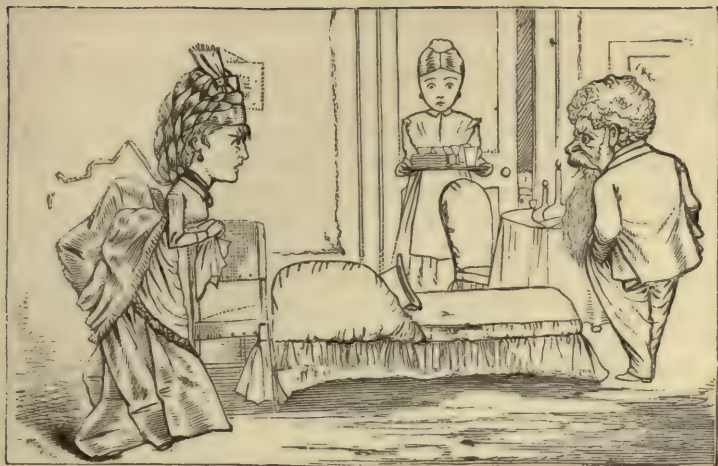
Pope Sixtus, however, was possibly unaware of the aspiring nature of the feminine soul, or it is a question whether he would not rather have endured an honourable martyrdom, to assure the peace of the world, rather than have taken such a step. He might have shut himself up in his palace, and excommunicated the turbulent females in his nightcap from an upper window. The thunders of the Church in those days struck terror into the hearts of the bravest. Perhaps they might have availed something against even a crowd of ladies; or, if he had held out till the last, and then died valiantly, he would have been entitled to the respect and affection of every usher and master of ceremonies in Europe.

Ambassadresses no sooner got their title recognised than they resolved to display it in full dress as publicly as possible. Quiet sober old fogeys, all tricks and whig, were promptly married by blooming and strong-minded young women of property and ambition. Widows of large fortune and a taste for society lay in wait for tottering elderly gentlemen who might have been their grandfathers, and led them off, in spite of senile struggles, to the nearest clergyman. There was quite a mania for Ambassadors among marriageable ladies. Numerous females who had long disappeared abruptly, in company with a jewel-case and a captain in the Guards, turned up again in the most unexpected and distressing manner, to insist upon an instant restitution of their conjugal rights. Other energetic ladies, with false fronts and immaculate reputations, who had hitherto submitted to be stowed away in holes and corners, started off with great decision for foreign capitals; and Ambassadors, who were whispering sweet nothings in the interest of their country to the most celebrated beauties of Paris or Madrid, were

startled by a well-remembered box on the ear and a peremptory order to take larger lodgings, from an awful creature in an antediluvian bonnet, whom they had not seen for twenty years. Diplomacy, from being rather a jolly profession than otherwise, became as dull as the private life of a comic actor; and most of the small-legged, knock-kneed, dried-up old beaux, in peach-blossom coats, who were among the diplomatic notabilities of those times, thought of the Pope with a feeling they were unable to express.

Moreover, the Ambassadors appeared with such pomp and splendour at the first Congress held after their promotion, that no business could go on because of them. Their husbands were obliged to rise in the very smallest hours of the morning, and to meet by stealth, in order that they might consult upon some means by which the Papal plague could be mitigated. The French Ambassador, of course, found them out, and at once raised the signal of revolt, while her husband turned traitor to the cause of his colleagues. Finally they got all they wanted, and the Congress separated without doing much worthy of record.

Among the Ambassadors best known to us is the wife of Sir William Temple, who played a prominent part in State affairs during his momentous embassy to Holland. She negotiated a marriage which was destined to change the history of England—that between William of Orange and Princess Mary, daughter of James II. She carried on a long and very remarkable correspondence both with the King and the Duke of York, who had to be managed by very different methods. The wives of several members of the illustrious house of Temple have been among the stateliest flowers of English womanhood, and Lady Palmerston was not the least of them. The extraordinary career of Lady Hamilton, at the Court of Naples, shows what women can do and dare; and it is but folly to condemn one half the world as triflers for the friskiness of a few dames who love frolic too much. In our own time Madame Dosne, Princess Lieven, Princess Eliza Troubetzkoi have played a large part in politics; and Lady Waldegrave showed a fine clear wit when Queen of London. The Marchioness of Salisbury helped to mar her husband's work, both abroad and at home. The most gracious and best of all Ambassadors, however, in this generation, was the Countess Cowley. Her tact was innate, her mind active, and her manners absolutely perfect.



SEMI-DETACHED WIVES.

I.

INTRODUCTORY.



THE Semi-detached Wife is a lady whose husband exists, but not for her. He may be in prison, or mad, or playing the truant; he may be anything, or anywhere; but he is not by her side, helping her to the best slices of his domestic bread and cheese, and giving her the cosiest place on his couch, as a tenderly attached husband should do. The Semi-detached Wife is an 'acting' widow, but without widow's rank or privileges. She resembles those Scotch peers, who, not sitting in the

House of Lords, are yet debarred from taking a seat in the Commons. Sometimes the Semi-detached Widow owes her anomalous position to her own fault, sometimes to her husband's; but in

either case the position is a trying one, and it is seldom that it can be held for long without loss of character.

There is a cogent reason for this; for all the world being deeply interested in the subject of matrimony, those ladies who have failed in their nuptial speculations find in every household a critic to ask why. To those who have succeeded, her failure may appear unintelligible; to those who have failed like herself, it may not always seem excusable, since there may have been in it some peculiarity which will cause others to think that her matrimonial lot was, after all, preferable to theirs.

There have been some famous Semi-detached Wives in history. Madames Shakespeare and Milton found it hard to get on with husbands whom all mankind admired; so did Lady Nelson and Lady Byron. Here we have four ladies wedded to heroes—four ladies whose lots must have seemed enviable to their respective contemporaries; and yet how much would they not have found to say on the other side of the question, if they had had any able counsel to hold a brief for them before the tribunal of history! The world has made up its mind that the four ladies named were wrong in their matrimonial squabbles; for it seems to tally with the general fitness of things that great men should have wives capable of comprehending them, and resolved to make them happy. But then great men are not always pleasant companions. They are apt to claim too much domestic worship, forgetting that home is a temple where the wife should be the divinity. Let a great man be content with having his statue in bronze and marble on public market-places, but let him refrain from asking his family to erect him a pedestal beside his own hearth. Above all, let him not expect that the wife who is accustomed to see him in his nightcap will acquiesce in his continually adorning that homely head-gear with laurels.

Women will give much reverence in exchange for a little love and tender treatment; but haughty patronage bores them. It is much to be feared that Shakespeare was by his own fireside a bore; Milton, with his mania for Greek and Latin studies, unquestionably was so; poor Byron suffered from an inflamed vanity which bled at the least touch; and Nelson was too fond of recounting to his lady the wondrous stories of his hairbreadth escapes by land and sea. At the seventy-seventh narrative of how gloriously the French were served one day in the Bay of Biscay the poor lady

yawned, and no wonder. Nelson would have yawned too, if he had heard for the seventy-seventh time how her ladyship had worsted the baker's boy in a wrangle about accounts.

Thus much for historical Semi-detached Wives; and now may be introduced some specimens of the tribe who flourish in our midst at this present writing.



II.

AUTHORESS AND ACTRESS.

EVERYBODY who is personally acquainted with the celebrities of the literary world has acknowledged the faithful likeness of the photograph of Mrs. M., which figures in most shop-windows. The attitude is slightly theatrical, and the expression of the features affected. The lady is standing near a desk covered with books; a huge hound crouches on a mat near her feet; she holds a quill pen in her hand, and is gazing with enrapt interest at a sheet of paper, which the artist evidently intended to represent a page of manuscript, but which might just as well be last week's butcher's bill. This is exactly as the popular novelist appears in real life, posturing for the admiration of her friends.

Her age is about thirty-five, and she had talent once, before she shredded it away by writing three sensational novels every year, to say nothing of magazine articles and essays on social

subjects by the score. In proportion as her ability diminished, so, of course, did her vanity and intellectual petulancy increase. She railed at the critics, who had at first encouraged her with the utmost kindness, but who could not, without protesting, submit to the downpour of 'pot-boilers,' which her publishers had begun to rain on their heads. She shrugged her shoulders at remonstrance, and defied 'Grub-street' (as she humorously styled the critical band) to shake her popularity, yet with irritable inconsistency inveighed against the squeamishness of the public, who allowed the critics to warp their judgment. The truth is, that at the time when Mrs. M. had the photograph of herself and the dog taken, the public were beginning to feel as if they had had a surfeit of her novels. A story of murder, well told, in careful style and with an artistic grouping of characters and incidents, is entertaining enough ; but some vulgar tale of crime or adultery, diluted in a thousand pages of wishy-washy prose, with characters as lifeless as barbers' blocks, and accessories having no more cohesion among themselves than the animalculæ which float about in a glass of Thames water—these are not a treat, but a weariness, to the reader. He can get his sensation much better and cheaper by reading the assize reports in a penny journal.

Mrs. M. had a husband, who was a clergyman ; but it was believed that his wife's hysterico-bilious effusions had scared him into privacy, for he was seldom to be met with. The two lived apart, though not judicially separated nor actually estranged from each other ; and Mrs. M. often alluded to the retiring divine in a tone of half-contemptuous patronage, as if he were a poor wight, whom she had signally honoured by marrying. The reality was all the other way ; for in the days when she was Miss X., the authoress had been glad and right proud to shelter her equivocal social position under the respected name of a scholar and gentleman ; and poor Mr. M. had taken her to wife whilst her young fame was still in its bloom, and seemed to promise a magnificent flowering in future days. Mr. M.'s weak health, which rendered it advisable that he should live much by the seaside, was alleged as the reason why the couple did not reside under the same roof ; but Mr. M. made such sparing references to his wife, even among those who knew him best, that persons often enjoyed his acquaintanceship for some time before they were led to discover his connection with the novelist, and curious mistakes resulted from this state of things.

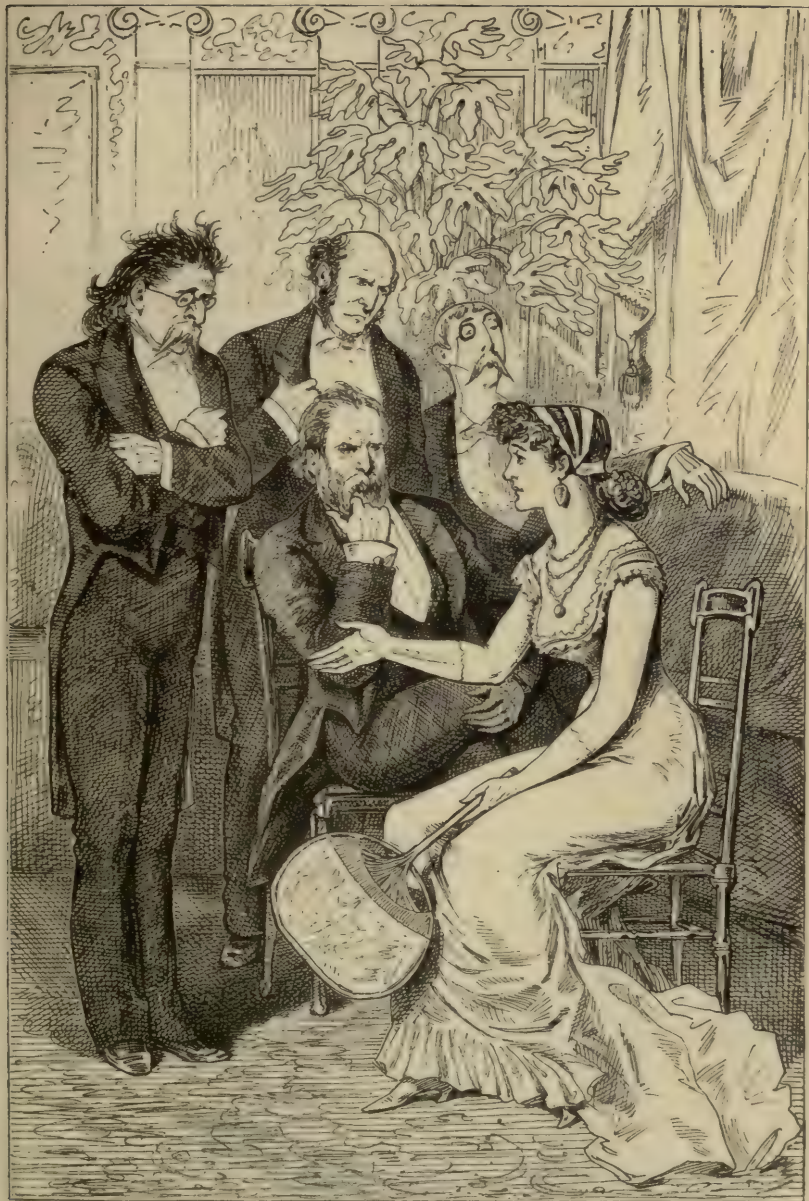
One day, as he was travelling, a gentleman who sat opposite him in the railway carriage fell into conversation on literary matters, and the talk glided on to Mrs. M.'s novels, which the gentleman fervently abused. Mr. M. uttered lamentable moans, concurring in every word; but the gentleman's astonishment may be judged, when later in the day he met this sighing parson at Mrs. M.'s own house (the gentleman himself was a journalist), and was introduced to him as her husband. It was not often that Mr. M. put in an appearance at his wife's pretty villa at Norwood; and



when he came the servants often failed to recognise him, and requested his card. His visits were generally on some charitable errand, such as begging Mrs. M. to contribute a little of her superfluity towards cases of exceptional destitution; and, to do her justice, she listened to such appeals the more readily as Mr. M. never asked anything for himself, seeing that he had a private maintenance of his own, which, though small, sufficed for his needs.

Sometimes it was Mrs. M. who would pay her husband a visit, swooping down, with maid, dog, and ten boxes, on the country parsonage where he might be taking temporary duty for a friend. Perhaps she felt the necessity of occasionally placing herself *sous pavillon conjugal* for a few weeks, so as not to let the world lose sight of the fact that she had 'marriage lines' to show; but these visits flustered all the life out of Mr. M., for the authoress utilised them for the purpose of 'noting down types from Nature.' Seated in the rectory pew, with a loud bonnet on her head and a pair of gold-rimmed glasses raised to her eyes, she would stare about her during divine service, and thought it no breach of good taste suddenly to whip out a kind of betting-book, and jot down reflections suggested by some detail of architecture or the nasal intonations of the parish clerk. On week-days she would patronise farmers and local gentry, asking odd questions, as if she were in a land of Caribbees, and everywhere proclaiming that she intended to lay the scene of her next novel in this part of the world; by which means she would cause a demand on Mudie's for at least three or four copies of her work more than would otherwise have been the case.

Generally speaking, however, Mrs. M. resided in her luxurious, extravagantly furnished Norwood home, where she gave many semi-Bohemian parties, dignified by the name of 'artistic and intellectual *réunions*.' At these delightful gatherings it was the custom to say a great deal of good about Mrs. M.'s works, and a great deal of evil about those of other authoresses and authors not present. The hostess would gushingly explain the drift of her last and feeblest production, and the subtle sense of it, which had escaped the critics. Her tongue would clatter by the half-hour, as she expatiated on the high art of realism in literature, as illustrated by the minutely nauseous descriptions in which her pen revelled; and she would allude, with an affectation of deeply contained energy, to the mighty novel which she *could* write, if she had to deal with a public freed from the uncultured hypocrisy which



AN INTELLECTUAL RÉUNION.

"She expatiated on the high art of realism in literature."

reigns in the British Isles. As Mrs. M.'s guests were not the leaders, but usually the sycophantic riffraff of literature, they listened with well-feigned rapture to her verbiage, being at heart thankful for past favours, in the shape of succulent dinners, and hungrily anxious for a continuance of the same.

Touching the question of Mrs. M.'s morals, and whether she were chaste, or had ever been the contrary, or were likely to be, nobody in society cared two pins; but it was clearly her opinion that thousands of eyes were intent to watch whether she took any liberties with poor Mr. M.'s bright honour. The minds of women who live outside the pale of lawful conjugal restraints are habitually redolent of unclean suspicions. They sniff the air for unsavoury odours, and scent them from afar; they blush at words that mean nothing; they fidget with nameless impulses, and fancy that everybody can detect the signs of the guilty itch that torments them.

Mrs. M. gave you her inky fingers to squeeze in a sly way, as if this conventional mode of salutation might expose her to misinterpretation; she placed a forefinger on her lips at times and in places where there was no occasion for secrecy; she drove a French translator of her books half mad one night by fainting in his arms in her own garden, and assuring him afterwards that all London would be talking about it the next day. One of the favourite characters in her novels was the squealing female who is always ready for an elopement with the first male who comes to hand, be he baronet, groom, or music-master. But nobody, so far as we are aware, had ever proposed to elope with Mrs. M., or would have ventured upon such an unnecessary proceeding even to prove his love for a practical joke. She was an invincible fortress whom no man has assailed—a fruit which the fabular fox would have called sour even if it had taken a header into his mouth.

Much better than Mrs. M., and the whole of that unsexed tribe who resemble her, do we love pretty, laughing, madcap Nelly N., the actress, who was in private life Mrs. P., though we believe her private life, so far as P. was concerned, consisted chiefly in telling him to go his ways, for that he and she had never been made for each other.

Why did not P. apply to the Divorce Court for release, seeing that he could have entered the witness-box with a sheath of proofs under each arm, and a train of witnesses at his heels enough to fill Westminster Hall? Well, he loved his wayward, winsome, sweet-

singing, naughty Nell, and never despaired that some day or other, when she had grown tired of breaking his heart, she would come back to him, who had forgiven her already times—almost seventy times seven. What made his infatuation the more ludicrously touching was that he had nothing in him that need have repelled an ordinary woman. He was neither a bully, rogue, nor drunkard; but a respectable hard-working young surgeon, who had fallen in love with her one night when he had gone to the theatre with an order from a friend, and with whom she herself had been in love during six weeks or so—just time enough to marry him and repent of it.

She had a private house of her own, which had been furnished for her by a Duke, somewhere near Regent's Park, and poor P. often called there on a Sunday (in the forenoon, before visitors came), and appealed to her feelings. He wanted her to leave the stage, and promised that if she would come home with him, he

would toil eighteen hours a day, that he might buy her the pretty dresses she was so fond of. Sometimes his despairing prayers moved her a little, and she would pass her hands through his hair, saying: 'Don't cry, Tom, poor old boy; I don't mean to be unkind, you know; but really we made a great mistake in marry-

ing each other. I am such a wicked thing, that I don't deserve to be your wife; and if we lived together I should play you such pranks, that some day you would pitch me out of the window.'

Then she would laugh a little, and say that if he threw her out





of the window he would be hanged for it, which would make her sorry; and, amused at this view, she would laugh outright, till he joined in without ceasing to cry, for all his nerves were jarring. It was horribly pathetic, but Nelly was in the right, for poor P. was happier without her than he could have been in her society.

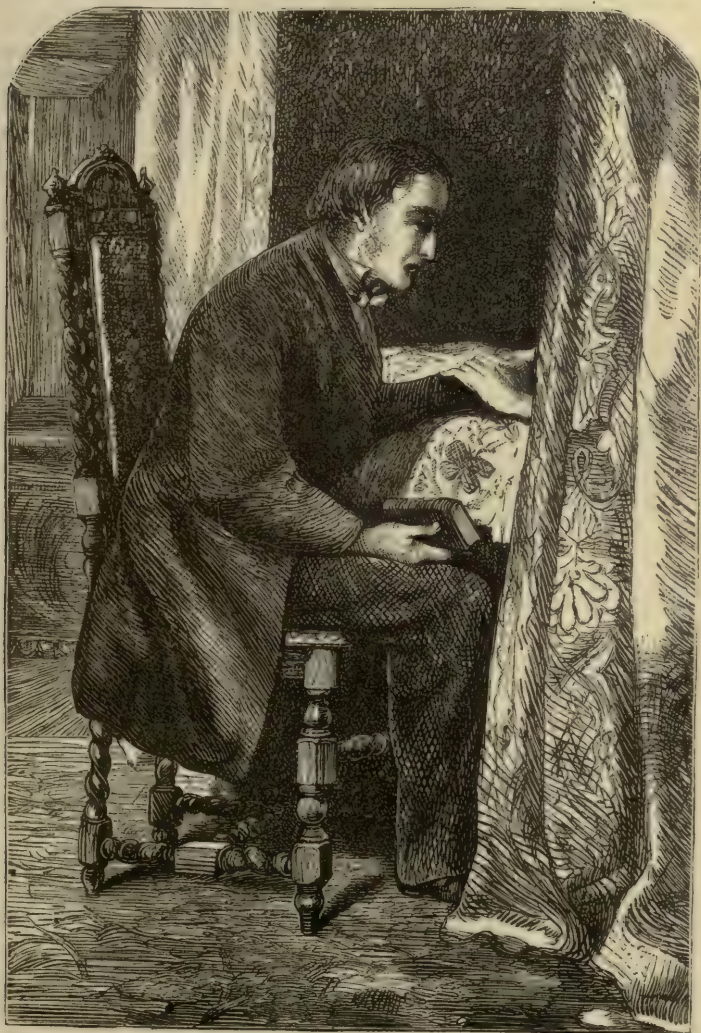
The fact is that she would not, or could not, keep straight. It was not that she had such an innate love of gay company, but gay company loved *her*, and had succeeded in turning her giddy little brain, which, in its calmest moments, had not much more steadiness than a weather-cock. The glare of the footlights, the songs she warbled so blithely, the enthusiastic applause of audiences, had become as natural atmosphere to her; she felt as though stifled when removed from them; and all this had brought its usual consequences of merry jinks in private life—dissipation, jewellery, champagne, lords, flirting critics, amorous brother actors, and other gay dogs galore. Why, bless her heart, Nell would pawn all her bracelets to carry an apron full of money to the widow of a scene-shifter who she had heard was dying of hunger; and one day she caught up a little starveling wench whom she saw selling violets, barefooted, in the streets, during a perishing March wind, and, carrying her off in her brougham, washed her, combed her, dressed her from head to foot in velvets and furs, and finally sent her home with two ten-pound notes in her purse.

All these things, and many others as impulsively kind, could Nelly N. do; but to be serious for ten minutes on any matter that concerned herself was not in her. Yet she could sing those pure old English ballads of love and faithful troth and homely joys with such accents as drew tears from the most hardened among the gilded crew who heard her; and on the stage she was most successful in enacting the characters of girls who are lovable for all the virtues of fidelity which she herself did not possess. Sometimes she would exclaim, with an instant's seriousness and conviction, 'If I were a man, and had such a wife as I am, I would strangle her!'

She had repeatedly offered her husband money to help him on in his profession; but he had, of course, refused, and she respected him for it. One day—a very bright day in spring—she alighted like a whirlwind at his lodgings, scampered up the stairs, and told him she had come to spend a long day—perhaps a whole week—with him. She laughed and cried, so did he; they lunched together, and were like bride and bridegroom again. But in the latter part of the afternoon Nell grew suddenly serious; then hurriedly put on her bonnet, and, after covering poor Tom with kisses, fled the house. She had been assailed by a passing fit of remorse; but it all vanished as she heard a barrel-organ playing one of her favourite airs, reminding her that it was impossible she

could ever tear herself away from the stage, where her heart and life were.

One night Nell came away from the theatre with a headache; next day she was worse, and the symptoms of typhoid fever set in.



She sent for her husband as soon as she felt delirium coming on : and he nursed her night and day through what was destined to be her first and last illness. If human skill could have saved her he would have done it, but the case was, from the first, hopeless. At the approach of death her consciousness returned for half an hour, and she recognised him, though he was wofully altered. She sat up, with a vague glance in her large eyes, and asked abruptly,

‘Tom, dear, do you think they will burn me—for ever?’

‘What an idea!’ faltered wretched P., trying to induce her to lie down again.

‘Oh, I know I deserve it,’ she continued, shaking her head. ‘But, Tom, I couldn’t repent if I tried ever so much ; and if my life were to begin over again, I am afraid I should act exactly as I have done. I was born wicked, you see, and it’s in my nature ; do you think *they*’ll take that into account?’

They did take it into account, we may be sure.



III.

SEPARATED BY MUTUAL CONSENT.

THERE is a category of Semi-detached Wives passably common in high life; namely, those who live under the same roof with their husbands, but have a separate establishment, do as they please, see whom they like, and only meet their lords at dinner-time or in society. These estrangements are usually managed so as to keep up appearances; and sometimes the disjoined parties contrive to remain very good friends, though they are friends, and nothing else. This, however, of course depends largely on the causes which produced the separation.

There are wives who voluntarily placed themselves in semi-detached condition because of an offence by their husbands; there are others who have been semi-detached to avoid the worse fate of a public scandal and divorce. In the former case matters often jog on fairly well; in the latter, the wife's condition is sometimes a shade or two worse than what we may believe purgatory to be. Yet this, again, depends much on the rank of the parties; husbands of the highest rank being invariably the most forbearing.

All this is a question of money. Decorous estrangements are impossible among the middle and lower classes, because the parties cannot afford to carry them on commodiously. Fancy a husband and wife trying to remain punctiliously distant from each other in a set of six-room lodgings, or a mechanic living on terms of well-bred reserve with the wife who cooks his dinner. Among working people matrimonial squabbles are perforce settled by yells and blows; in the classes next above, who can screw together 100*l.* to buy a divorce, the parties rush off to Westminster, and pay lawyers to wash all their dirty linen in public.

Balzac has well remarked that it is only underbred persons who care to hunt after proof of their own dishonour, and then trumpet them for the public amusement. Save under very exceptional circumstances, a nobleman would not thank the rascal who brought him tidings that my lady had forgotten her marriage-vow. He would much rather hush up so inconvenient a matter; and as for

ladies of the aristocracy, they are, of course, obliged to evince the extremest indulgence touching the clandestine freaks of their husbands. Society would become a bear-garden if gentlewomen made the same fuss as shopkeepers' wives every time their lords were convicted of flirting.

A delinquent husband of wealth and position, whose wife has put herself on semi-detached footing, has only himself to thank for a catastrophe which would never have occurred had he taken the commonest precautions to guard against his wife's dignity being wounded. In most of these cases the husband has acted so foolishly that it has been impossible for the wife to close her eyes to his escapade, and being a proud woman, she has told him that she will never forgive it. She does not really mean this; if she could divine that her hasty words would cause her to live for years and years alienated from a man whom she has once loved, and perhaps loves still—nay, that death would part them before they had become reconciled—she would bite her tongue off sooner than doom herself to such pitiful loneliness.

But the words are pronounced in a moment of just anger; and the wealth of the parties gives them such facilities for effecting a quiet separation, that their new state of life soon becomes established as a custom which neither of them can well break through. They live in different parts of the house, seldom see each other except in the presence of servants or strangers, and on all occasions treat each other with a politeness which acts as a barrier to anything like cordial impulsiveness. Then the servants of the household, the relatives, and family friends, fall into the secret of the arrangement, and acquiesce in it as an accomplished fact; so that it would need a world of moral courage for either of the parties to venture on the first step towards a reconciliation, much as both of them might secretly wish it.

Pride and false shame are terrible perpetuators of strife. A proud woman may fret over the past, but she will eat her heart out rather than let it be seen what she suffers; and, on his side, the husband, feeling himself in the wrong, and judging of his wife's sentiments by her cold mien, fears to risk advances which might be repelled to his discomfiture. Besides, in these estrangements, time operates against the wife, who, in growing older, sometimes loses much of her attractiveness; while the husband, being dependent for his means of solace, not on his good looks, but on his





THE ERRING WIFE.

money, finds no difficulty in compensating himself for uxorial hostility after the Turkish and Mormon fashions.

It does not follow that a Semi-detached Wife glides at once into infidelity. There are women whose very pride keeps them pure in spite of all temptation. But if it should be otherwise, and if a woman should claim the same license as she sees her husband arrogate to himself as a right, the man only gets what he richly deserves. On this point let there be no sentimentalising, or sophistical talk about the difference between sexes. Nature has made the woman to be loved and cherished, and the husband's marriage-vow confesses her claim to his exclusive worship; but if the husband chooses to go and love and cherish other women, he must not be surprised if his wife regards herself as absolved from her own oath of faithfulness. Most husbands of aristocratic rank recognise this logic (pulling somewhat wry faces as they do so); and their only stipulation is that my lady shall not get herself talked about, or introduce into the family circle little boys and girls whom the putative father could not dandle with feelings of paternity.

Respecting Semi-detached Wives who have been offenders in the preliminaries that led to separation, it cannot be said that their lot is ever an enviable one. The most rakish of men has always a great deal to say about uxorial duty; and if he show himself merciful on grounds of policy, he will often consider it binding upon his dignity to treat his erring wife with a cold disdain far worse than the cruelty of downright abuse. Old men make terrible censors of young wives who have stumbled. Although their magnanimity may have proceeded solely from the fear that they would cover themselves with ridicule by a publication of their connubial woes, they recur to their forgiveness with peevish iteration, until they either cow their wives into the condition of hysteric Magdalens, or drive them frantic into new exploits worse than the first.



It is not every Robin Gray who can evince the equanimity of that old French Duke, who, patting his young wife's hand, remarked

pathetically : 'Ma chère amie, je me doutais bien que cela m'arriverait, mais pas si tôt.'

As a rule aged Frenchmen, Italians, and Spaniards are incomparably more adroit in making the best of a false position than Englishmen. They have more tact, good-humour, and philosophy; they shrink more sensitively from ridicule, and have a keener insight into the uselessness of lecturing a young and pretty woman who is bent on going her own way. One of these courtly old gentlemen, having been regaled by his own valet with reports of things unsuspected, slipped a bank-note into the rogue's hand, and said : 'Hush ! don't speak so loud. Madame might hear you, and she would never forgive me.' Besides this, duelling enables continental husbands to avenge themselves in quiet summary ways that are not within reach of the British. Innumerable foreigners have been honourably pistolled at daybreak by veteran husbands, who had the good taste never to breathe a word to their young wives as to the motives which had led to these tragedies.

When a young husband ascertains things which every husband is the happier for never learning, the same philosophy cannot be expected of him as of an older man. In the first place the lady has, generally speaking, much less excuse for her misconduct ; and if the husband be found condoning it, one may safely presume that he has reasons for so doing which redound little to his honour. Drunkards, scamps, and men afflicted with some bestial mania or other, are categories of men who do not care to face cross-questions in the Divorce Court ; and there are other husbands who object to turn guilty wives out of doors, because they would turn out a great deal of money and many valuable connections at the same time.

These high-souled beings may be said to constitute the majority among the young husbands of Semi-detached Wives. They are tied by the tooth ; they dare not raise a shout, because their mouths are full of the roast meats which their wives have stuffed there.

Say that young Mr. O. has married Miss Q., whose uncle John means to make her his heiress. Uncle John becomes the Providence and oracle of his niece's household. He pays the Christmas bills, sends hampers of game and wine, has always a spare 20*l.* note to satisfy Mrs. O.'s whims, and he helps on Mr. O. in his business or profession. If Mr. O. were to go to this old gentleman and inform him that his niece was a good-for-naught, he would be assisted down-stairs by a kick in the coat-tails, uncle John would take



SEPARATED BY MUTUAL CONSENT.

"Mrs. O. receives afternoon visits from gentlemen of whose very names her husband is ignorant."



Mrs. O. to his home, and Mr. O. would be left to provide himself with meats and divorce-costs out of his own earnings. Mrs. O., who knows very well how the wind lies, has a gunpowdery way of exclaiming, on the slightest provocation, that if O. is not satisfied with her proceedings she will put on her bonnet and go; and the poor marital parasite is fain to vapour off his wrath in virtuous bluster which means nothing.

So little does Mrs. O. care for the spiritless fellow that she carries on her flirtations to his face. She goes to the theatre without asking his leave, wears jewellery which neither he nor uncle John ever paid for—though she will coolly tell uncle John in his presence that the trinkets are her husband's gifts—and she will receive afternoon visits from gentlemen of whose very names Mr. O. is ignorant, but whom he finds comfortably toasting their heels at his drawing-room fire when he returns from his office. One day Mrs. O. sends him a telegram announcing that she has been sum-

moned to Brighton, and returns three days afterwards, saying she has been to see her aunt—she having no aunt. On another occasion O. receives an anonymous letter filled with four pages of revelations as to his wife's amusements, and in nervous haste he pokes the dangerous communication into the fire. Next a cook, with whom Mrs. O. has had words about a missing joint, declares she will make a clean breast of everything she knows to 'master;' and master is obliged thereupon to put on a face of hot indignation, and order the hussy out of the house forthwith for daring to insult her mistress.

In the end things come to such a pass that O., who has long ceased to threaten that he will complain to uncle John, is in mortal dread lest uncle John should scent out something of his own self unaided. The sagacious relative has been seen to gaze upon his niece with a frown; he puts uneasy questions, and tells O., with a look that has somewhat of a searching expression in it, that young wives like 'Jenny' require a good deal of supervision—all of which makes the dew of anguish ooze from O.'s brow. What if uncle John should bequeath his precious money away from his niece? The thought is so horrible that O. racks his brains for expedients by which the truth may be concealed. He becomes an active conniver in, as well as abettor of, his own shame; he invents the lies which his wife shall tell; he instructs her to show herself a little more affectionate towards him when the old man is looking on; and he himself drawls out such long yarns about his Jenny's domestic virtues, that simple-hearted uncle John, who cannot suspect the depths of the cur's unclean villany, privately sets him down as the greatest fool who ever lived.

We repeat that husbands of Mr. O.'s type are not by any means rare; but if you called them dogs they might bring actions against you, and recover damages.



IV.

CANDIDATES FOR A DECREE NISI.

SOME four years ago Mrs. S. came home from Madras along with her three children, leaving her husband behind in India. She cried a good deal at parting with the honest Captain, and he himself was equally affected, but the children's health required the separation. European children born in India generally begin to sicken about the fifth year; so it becomes a question with all British officials who cannot afford a summer residence for their little ones 'up the hills,' whether they shall lose their wives for a time, or their children for good and all.

There is the alternative of sending home the children alone to be educated by an aunt; but Mrs. S. was an affectionate mother, who did not wish her children to grow up out of her sight.

She went to live in London, taking a small house in a shabby suburban neighbourhood, for economy was an object. Captain S.'s income had been sufficient to keep his family comfortably in India, but it was hardly enough to maintain two establishments in the style which officers deem suitable to their rank. Mrs. S. soon began to regret her crowd of Indian servants, her flowery bungalow, the festive hospitalities of Madras, and that social queenship which all English ladies (and especially young ones) hold on Indian soil. The fogs and dirt of London, the dearth of all things, the sauciness and slatternliness of housemaids, and the lack of congenial society, told upon her spirits, and made her think that Fate had dealt hardly with her in condemning her to a life of genteel pauperism and virtual widowhood. Mrs. S. knew that five years, at least, must elapse before she could see her husband again, for it would have been unsafe to return with the children until they had been thoroughly seasoned by European climate; and the Captain himself could not afford the expense of six months' furlough and the journey simply to gratify his affections.

Hundreds of Anglo-Indians stand in Mrs. S.'s position, and a very trying one it is. They are Semi-detached Wives, who, when they love their husbands, are profoundly wretched, and when they

do not are very apt to treat their temporary freedom as if it were a definite one. They act like widows of the flightiest sort, frisk about to parties and places of amusement, run up bills, omit to pay them, or pay them with money never remitted from marital hands, until some bright day the husband—who has been privately warned by an officious friend or an anonymous letter—lands unexpectedly at Southampton, posts up to London without announcing his arrival, and discovers a variety of queer things, which are soon after revealed before a judge and jury, and become the occasion of a Decree Nisi, with costs against one or more co-respondents. It has been noticed that Anglo-Indian ladies form a large percentage of those who are cited before Sir James Hannen's tribunal.

Mrs. S. was too straight-minded a little woman, and moreover too fond of her children, to go wrong simply because she felt bored by her new position. But the depressing influence of London did undoubtedly develop some irritable propensities in her, and rendered her too pervious to sundry tales which began to reach her, anent her gallant husband's mode of comporting himself during her absence. Mrs. S. had made some acquaintances among the Anglo-Indian Londoners, and it was these who poisoned her peace, under pretence of conveying to her salutary warnings. They affected to pity her, and advised her to rebel. 'But what would you have me do?' she inquired piteously. 'Why, do as we all do—pay the men back in their own coin,' was the ready answer. Mrs. S. failed to see how such reprisals could console her for all she heard; and she felt very miserable to think that Jack S. was demeaning himself so unblushingly towards a certain odious Mrs. T., that 'all London' was gloating over his indiscretion.

Anglo-Indian ladies are continually receiving letters from the East, and circulate among one another all the gossip they contain, passing even the letters themselves on to their more intimate friends. In this way quite a fund of scandal reached Mrs. S. regarding her husband, Anglo-Indian ladies also receive many legates, in the form of officers or civil functionaries on furlough, who have been deputed by their husbands to bring them boxes of presents, such as shawls, ivory nicknacks, toys, and what not; and one bright day Mrs. S. was favoured with the visit of one of these emissaries, a middle-aged Civil Commissioner, with a beard two feet long, and a face like hardbake. Gallant withal, and talkative, this sunburnt placeman unfolded a fine quantity of Madras tattle, whilst he was



UNPLEASANT NEWS FROM THE EAST.

helping Mrs. S. to unpack the trunk full of Hindostanish produce, which Jack S. had sent; and finally he unfolded the state of his own heart, which, said he, had burned with a pure flame for Mrs. S. ever since he had quadrilled with her at old Hookey's ball at Fort St. George, two years previously.

The avowal was not made in such blunt terms as this; indeed it took several more visits before the full sense of it became manifest. But Mr. Commissioner Doubleyew was not a reticent mortal, and he made the best speed in pressing on to his point, which was, that Mrs. S.'s semi-detached status gave her an admirable chance of reciprocating in perfect safety the sentiments which bubbled within his own bosom, and the which, he was persuaded, would end by bursting their receptacle if she did not allow him to give them a free vent.

Mrs. S. was divided between the desire to turn Mr. Doubleyew out of doors with a broom, and the much more feminine impulse to lock herself up and have a good cry. She ordered the Commissioner never to show his face again; but he called the next day to beg pardon, and again, several days in succession, to make sure that her forgiveness was complete. There are men whom bolts and bars cannot keep out. The bearded Commissioner had a stock of effrontery which nothing could dash, and an inexhaustible vein of jocularity, which, while it rendered him irresistibly amusing, was well calculated to blind a female listener as to his real designs. Thus will the light skirmishers of an army, thrown out in front of a line of battle, conceal the movements of the forces manœuvring behind. Men who know how to make a lonely woman laugh are always dangerous.

However, Mrs. S. was dangerous herself—as a beautiful and well-armed citadel. Mr. Commissioner Doubleyew, who had set out a-conquering, was out-flanked in his siege operations, driven off his guns, and finally made captive, with arms and baggage. And the besieged won this victory with little trouble.

There sprang up between the two an attachment, which was violently passionate on his side, and coolly calculating on hers. She liked the man without loving him: he was kind to her children, obedient to her own slightest behests, a man of affluent circumstances and good professional prospects, who was probably on the high road to a K.C.B.-ship—just the person, in fact, to make her an excellent second husband, in case she should decide upon divorcing Jack S. Mr. Commissioner Doubleyew's friends told

him he was making a fool of himself; but he did not think there lay any folly, or even unmanliness, in urging a delightful woman to separate herself from a fellow who was cutting capers three thousand miles off, and evidently did not care for her a straw. He intrigued among the Anglo-Indian ladies, so that they should din into Mrs. S.'s ears incessant tales of the Captain's jinks, and drive her to exasperation by their cackling sympathy. He himself worked with hypocritical cleverness by pretending to disbelieve the awkward stories; and he could not be got to admit that certain bits



of scandal published by the Madras papers, and which sorely troubled Mrs. S.'s peace of mind, could only refer to Captain S. All this, however, simply made Mrs. S. feel the more certain that, out of regard for her, he was hiding a great deal of what he knew.

She felt a bitter resentment against her husband for having exposed her to these indignities; and when, at last, she told the Commissioner that she would play the tame victim no longer, she seemed to hint that she relied upon his good offices to assist her in all the legal steps necessary to procure her release. This task Mr. Doubleyew accepted forthwith. A couple of discharged servants, recently returned from Madras—the one a lady's-maid, the other a drunken butler; a slanderous major, who had a personal grudge against Captain S.; and two or three other loquacious persons, whose belief in the Captain's guilt was based mainly on hearsay reports, furnished a mass of evidence which, submitted to those able lawyers Messrs. Ferrit & Pry, made up a first-rate brief to put into the hands of the eloquent Serjeant Bumpus.

One vital element was, however, wanting to make Mrs. S.'s case flawless, and that was the allegation of cruelty. No cruelty, no divorce, is the law as regards the weak sex. Mr. Pry begged the petitioner to sift her recollections, and earnestly consider whether there had never been a slap on the face, a tweak of the ears, or 'just a little pinch on the arm before witnesses, you know,' which could be magnified into gross inhumanity; but, rack her memory as she might, Mrs. S. could not remember that Jack S. had ever affronted her with so much as a harsh word. This was unfortunate, and it remained for the Captain, by giving his wife a swinging box on the ears, to perfect a case which was in other respects beautifully complete.

The unfortunate officer had for some time past been struck by a tone of discontent and covert insinuation which pervaded his wife's letters, and also by the curtness of these epistles. He answered in a style of affectionate banter, thinking he had only to deal with that jealousy which is a proof of love, and comes pretty naturally to all young women who are separated from their husbands; but one morning there fell upon his breakfast-table, like a bombshell, a letter full of blots, tears, and wild reproaches, ending with the distraught intimation that the writer had confided her interests to persons who were willing and able to protect her. The next mail brought a communication from Messrs. Ferrit & Pry,

who begged to be informed of the name of Captain S.'s solicitors, on whom they might serve a citation.

All this was absolute ruin to the Captain, who found himself obliged to borrow money at high interest to return to England and prove his guiltlessness of a charge which he considered mere trumpery, and which really was so. He was compelled to mortgage his commission, to renounce a chance of professional advancement which opportunely presented itself at this moment, to sell off horses and divers other belongings at a loss, and to fritter away 100*l.* in a series of telegrams, costing 5*l.* each. However, he could not disculpate himself by electricity; so home he came, indignant, raging, and persuaded that his wife must have lost her reason.

Perhaps a temperate explanation between the parties might have set matters right, for Jack S. loved his wife better than any woman on earth; he doted on his children too; and Mrs. S. herself was not yet so hardened but that the charm of his presence, coupled with a judicious display of kindness and repentance on his part, might have moved her to tears and forgiveness. But angry people go to work in the wrong way, and the Captain, forgetting that he was on his defence in the matter of Mrs. S., chose to take umbrage at the assiduities of Mr. Commissioner Doubleyew, of which it would seem that some little bird had reported to him more than

enough. He taxed his wife with levity, heartlessness, dereliction from all her duties as a mother; and the result was a scene of vituperative recrimination and sobbing, which drew up the servants to the keyhole, and was finally brought to a climax by the Captain's calling his wife a simpleton, and dealing her such a slap on the cheek as resounded



SERJEANT BUMPUS.

through the passage, and thence carried joyful echoes into the office of Messrs. Ferrit & Pry, Pump-court, Middle Temple.

There was nothing for it then but to go to work hammer and tongs. The Captain's lawyers retained Mr. Rumpus, Q.C., and filed a counter-petition against the wife and Mr. Commissioner Doubleyew as co-respondent. A day was set down for the hearing; and Bumpus and Rumpus came into court, with freshly powdered wigs, to do their best in a cause which promised plenty of fun.

Who that has ever attended one of those ignoble Divorce-Court suits has been able to refrain from sincerely pitying the parties to it? That women of the sort who bring actions for breach of promise—that brazen-faced jades, tipsy trollops, and women who have been bullied to the verge of idiocy—should carry the confessions of their infamy or unendurable wretchedness to this rowdy tribunal is comprehensible; but that a woman having any vestige of modesty or dignified good sense should do so is only explicable under the supposition that she

has no idea of what she is going to face. Long before her own advocate, Bumpus, had finished opening her case, Mrs. S. felt ready to sink through the floor from shame. Loud-whispering women in the galleries stared at her through their opera-glasses; the barristers' benches ogled her; and the specta-



tors crowding behind greeted every one of Bumpus's humorous pauses with prolonged titters. The judge indulged in an occasional smile, and never ceased to take notes.

But after Bumpus it was the turn of Rumpus to lift up his voice; and then came the witnesses, mumbling, prevaricating, nervous, and red, till the laughter of the court gave them a moment of ribald boldness, soon to be checked, however, by the torture of cross-questioning, which caused them to writhe and spit out lie after lie. Then it was that Mrs. S., burying her crimson face in her hands, felt as though the wide earth could never afford her a spot dark

enough to hide in. Some of the abominable accusations that were levelled against her by Rumpus made her stagger and gasp, as if the bewigged rough were flailing at her with a whip. And then those witnesses, what a crew!

Suborned menials, who had peeped through chinks; foul-minded old women, 'who had pieced two and two together;' cabmen, who swore to having driven Mrs. S. to places she had never visited; hotel-waiters and chambermaids, who thought they could identify



her as the lady who had occupied 'No. 26' with a gentleman; a baker's boy, who had seen a man, the very image of Mr. Doubleyew, issue from her house at early morning; and Private Inquiry agents, who had lumped all these testimonies into a concrete of nastiness;—these were the persons who were subpoenaed to prove that Jack S.'s wife had behaved herself with the Commissioner as the vilest of the vile.

'Aha, gentlemen of the jury,' bawled Mr. Rumpus, 'the plaintiff is, you see, a pretty sort of person to come into court with a story of pretended wrongs. Now that we have unmasked her, I look with confidence to your verdict being in accordance with her deserts.'

After this burst of rhetoric Mrs. S. fainted, and had to be carried out of court.

But British judges are shrewd men as well as learned; and he who presided in the Divorce Court, having



RUMPUS, Q.C.

winnowed the chaff of evidence from the grain, pointed out that there was not enough of the latter to feed even a scandal magpie. The jury, without leaving their box, returned a verdict that both parties had failed to substantiate their allegations; in other words, that both the Captain and Mrs. S. were stainless; whereupon the judge paternally expressed a hope that the combative couple would contrive to make it up.

Make it up, indeed! Just as if people who had spent a whole day in bespattering each other with mud would feel an inclination to rush into each other's arms and kiss! Mrs. S. might have forgiven Captain Jack for his abandoned doings with Mrs. T., but to her dying day she could never forget how he had inhumanely sat by while Rumpus was belabouring her; and the Captain, on his side, though he might have overlooked the draining expenses to which he had been put, and the utter ruin of Mrs. T.'s reputation, which had been caused by his wife's fault, could never pardon 'that blackguard Bumpus' for having so savagely vilified him by her orders.

If it had not been for their soreness at the deplorable handling

they had both undergone in court, the pair would have rushed off to Westminster and had a new tussle about the custody of their children. As it was, they agreed, through their solicitors, to fee an eminent barrister 100*l.* to arbitrate on this point. The Captain declared he would never suffer his wife to keep the children after the outrageous way in which she had behaved; and so the arbiter decreed that the three little ones should be confided to a relative, where their mother should be allowed to visit them under restrictions as to time and frequency. Captain S. of course undertook to bear the costs of the arrangement, and to allow his wife so much a year for her own maintenance. These things being settled, the Captain returned to India. As for Mr. Doubleyew, he likewise went back to his commissionership, but contrived to keep out of his enemy's way, having been emphatically cautioned that if he came within reach of him, he would be made to dance a jig to the music of a horsewhip.

Moral of the foregoing little story: Mrs. S. will remain an unhappy Semi-detached Wife so long as she and her husband are both alive.



V.

A VERY VIRTUOUS SEMI-DETACHED WIFE.

THE Countess Z. may or may not have been *née* Matilda Thompson, but there is a rumour to this effect which prevents her coronet from being regarded with the reverence usually bestowed on such

august symbols. When an ex-governess claims to enter the spheres of nobility it is desirable that she should walk in on the arm of the husband who has ennobled her. Yet this the Countess has never been enabled to do. Count Z. is alive, and flourishes with all the vigour of a Polish magnate, who has managed to save a comfortable income out of the wreck of his down-trodden country's fortunes, but he and his wife live apart. Why?

Count Z. resides chiefly on continental race-courses; and when greeted with an inquiry as to his wife's health, he gazes at the tips of his boots, and brings all his scattered wits to bear on the question as to when he last heard from the faithful partner of his pecuniary means, then looks up with a troubled expression, and answers, 'She is very well, I think, thank you,' and shambles off as if he were being poked fun at. The Countess is not quite so reticent on the conjugal topic, for she is often heard to remark that she expects the Count home 'every day;' but the days roll themselves into months and years, and still the Count never appears to rejoice in the affectionate preparations which, we may conclude, are made every morning to receive him.

There is a little mystery at the bottom of this situation which will, perhaps, bear looking into.

Count Z. is not the *premier venu*. He has dabbled in war and politics; been a general of insurgent troops, a conspirator, member of a provisional government, and, at odd moments, a pamphleteer of no mean talent. At Warsaw, in 1863, he held the Russians in check till brute numbers gave them the victory. His compatriots adore him, and his head is worth ever so many roubles on the Czar's territory at this moment.

After the quenching of the Polish rebellion Count Z., wounded and sick at heart, came to recruit his health in England, where he was received with the distinction usually accorded to foreign revolutionists, though it is, for some inexplicable reason, denied to those of indigenous growth. He became the guest of a philo-Polish peer, and this peer's children had a governess, who, like my lord, felt enthusiastically towards barricade heroes in general, and towards Count Z. in particular. The Count soon won her heart, gave her a bracelet in exchange, and thought he might cry quits on those terms. But Miss Thompson was a better hand at a bargain.

She had three athletic brothers, who waited on Count Z., and declared to him that if he did not repair the breach he had oc-

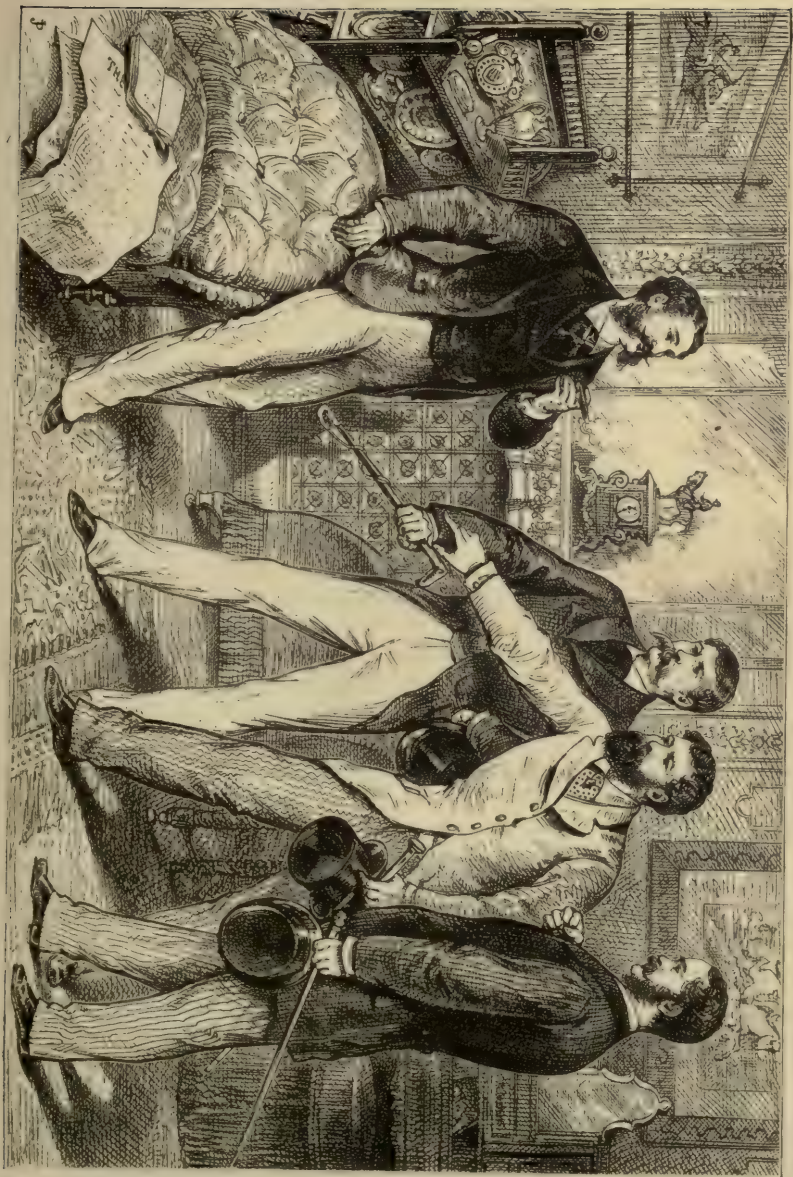
casioned in their sister's honour, they would make such an example of him that he would start thenceforth at his own shadow. They hastened to add, that they would listen to no foreigneering nonsense about duelling with sword or pistols. If he hesitated to marry Miss Thompson they would prosecute him for breach of promise of marriage, and after that, dog him from city to city, and chastise him in public places. The eldest of the three pulled out his watch, and gave Count Z. fifteen minutes to make up his mind.

Now the revolutionary chief was a little man, but valour does not depend on inches, and he was as brave as a well-plucked weazel. If he had had to face a simple question of dealing with three troublesome Thompsons, he would have flown to the poker, and cracked their three pates before they had had time to notice which brother had been hit first. But Count Z. was in heart and soul a gentleman, and most sedulous to preserve unsullied the reputation he had acquired as a soldier, patriot, and Liberal. He considered that the whole Polish cause would be involved in any dishonour that befell him personally; and Heaven knows that Poland had but too much cause to bewail the unworthiness of many a son who ought to have set a blameless example in exile.

In a cold and rapid way, judging his own case, the Count saw that he had offended, and that there were no excuses for him. Had he not abused the hospitality of Lord X., by trifling with a governess under his roof? had he not trifled with the miserable girl herself, by dazzling her with his fame and assumed love (Count Z., though brave, was not too modest)? and had he not given these three puddle-blooded Englishmen the right to say that a Count Z. had acted as a liar and a rogue? What would all honourable-minded Poles say if these things were published in the newspapers? What would his countrymen of Warsaw think if they saw the Russian officers commenting on his case with jeers, as they read it aloud in the *cafés*? and what would his brother Liberals of the secret societies do if they learned that he, the advocate of equality and popular principles, had declined to marry a poor girl whom he had ruined, simply because she was not his equal in birth?

The upshot of these dismal musings was that Count Z. begged of the three Thompsons the hand of their sister. He did not yield to craven fear, but purely to the exigencies of his position as a man of honour and a noble. And the marriage took place accordingly in the Polish church of London.

COUNT Z. AND THE BROTHERS THOMPSON.



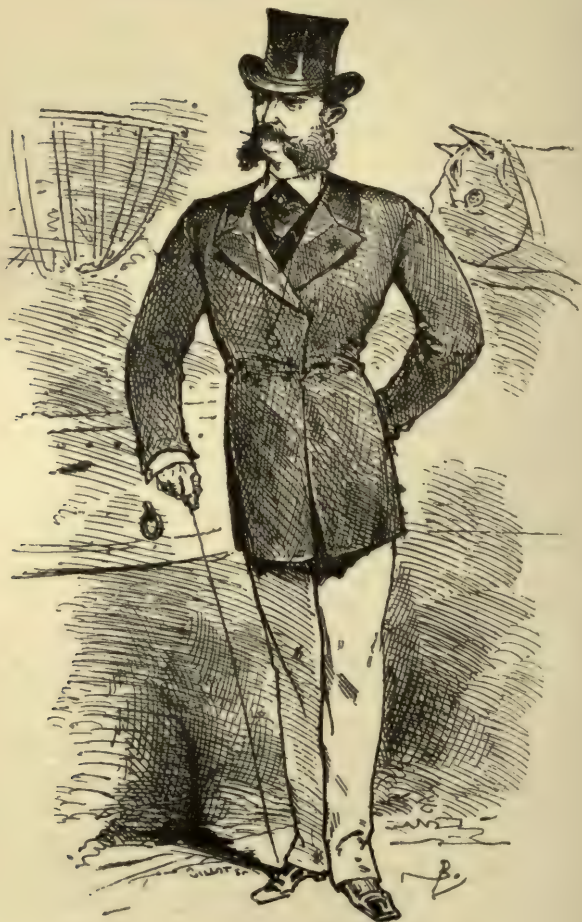
This, however, was but the first act of the matrimonial comedy. When the wedding was over the happy party adjourned to an hotel, and there Count Z. made his wife a little speech in the presence of her brothers. He said: 'Madame, you have fallen in love with my name and fortune, and now they are both yours. The latter within proper limits you may dispose of as you please: but the former I require you to keep free from blemish. I shall not live with you, for our characters would ill agree; but if it ever reaches me that you have done anything calculated to bring my name to dishonour, I shall come to your house, *and I shall shoot you!*'

Then turning to the three Thompsons: 'And you, gentlemen, be pleased to remember that as your sister is my wife you have become my relations, and I expect you to behave yourselves in such wise that I shall never have to blush for you. I hope this hint will suffice, for you can ascertain by inquiries among my friends that I am not a man to be trifled with. I have done my duty; now do yours.' The three Thompsons felt a momentary inclination to smile, in the consciousness of their unassailability as Britons, but something in the look of Count Z.'s steel-blue eyes checked this process of exhilaration. Possibly they all three wished at that minute that they had left their sister to take care of herself.

Count Z. went off to France, and abandoned himself to turf pursuits—not as a blackleg, but as a gentleman. He was fond of horseflesh; and having nothing else to do, now that his *mésalliance* had debarred him from domestic joys, he set up a racing-stable, trained his horses himself, and ran them with considerable success for the best prizes. His colours have always been highly respected on the turf, as it is known that the nags who carry them run 'straight.'

The Countess Z. remained in England, and began to lead a life of compulsory virtue, the like of which was never devised before for the enslavement and worry of a Semi-detached Wife. Being a romantic person, she soon had romance enough for her needs in the circumstances and surroundings of her extraordinary existence; an existence of gilded fetters, under close espionage, and with a vision of death's-heads to haunt her by day and night.

Her husband had refused to introduce her into London society, not wishing his wife to be laughed at for her low origin or deficient manners by the gentlemen among whom a Countess Z. ought to have trod on a footing of equality; and he would not allow her to reside abroad, because she might easily have fallen there amongst



COUNT Z.

other Semi-detached Wives of doubtful repute. As she was an Englishwoman, her proper place was in England. If she were to go on the Continent, and he lived apart from her, people might be asking questions.

He had given her four Polish servants, who were devoted to him, with the same kind of fidelity as Scottish clansmen displayed of yore towards their chiefs. The eldest—a lady whose husband was

in Siberia, and who had herself been rescued from butchery at the hand of Russian soldiers by Count Z.'s bravery—acted as her housekeeper and, when the Countess desired it, as her companion ; a younger woman, the Count's foster-sister, was her maid ; and a pair of male Poles, Dobelwitz and Trikski, who would have cut each other's throats, or any one else's, at a sign from their master, whom they had served in the wars, filled the posts of coachman and butler. These servants had orders to treat their mistress with the humblest deference, to obey her in all things, but to keep incessant watch over her actions. The groom, footman, cook, and housemaids were English, but had been carefully chosen for their respectability by the housekeeper, Madame Marieneff, who spoke our language almost faultlessly.

At first the ex-Miss Thompson found her luxurious existence



pleasant enough. She had 4,000*l.* a year (a third of her husband's income), a fine house in Belgravia, her carriage, and a box at the Opera; and it amused her to show herself in parks and theatres, richly apparelled and attended. No hindrance was placed in the way of



her going to the seaside or visiting her relatives in the country ; and she was free to receive at her own house what friends she liked, provided only they were persons of unimpeachable character. She gathered round her some of her former pupils who had married ; a few clergymen's and doctors' wives ; some ladies with whom she became acquainted in serving as patroness on charitable committees ; and sundry friends of her family who had known her in childhood : altogether a decent and presentable circle, which would have satisfied any woman content to lead a quiet life that none could carp at.

But the ex-Miss Thompson was not fashioned to appreciate the blessings of humdrum respectability. The instincts of virtue were not in her, nor the cravings after paths of peace. It humiliated her to be the only countess in her circle. She would have liked to awe her clergymen's wives and family friends with throngs of sister countesses and baronesses, till their souls grew sick with envy, and they learned to feel how great an honour she, Countess Z., was doing them in receiving them at her board. One summer, at Scarborough, she fell in with an authentic Polish Princess, as affable as she was rich and pretty, and the pair became inseparable friends in the course of a forenoon ; but as soon as Count Z. received news of the intimacy he wrote one of his laconic notes : ' Princess V. is not a suitable friend for a lady of your rank ; she is an adventuress, and I request you to drop her ;' and drop her Miss Thompson accordingly did, gnashing her teeth.

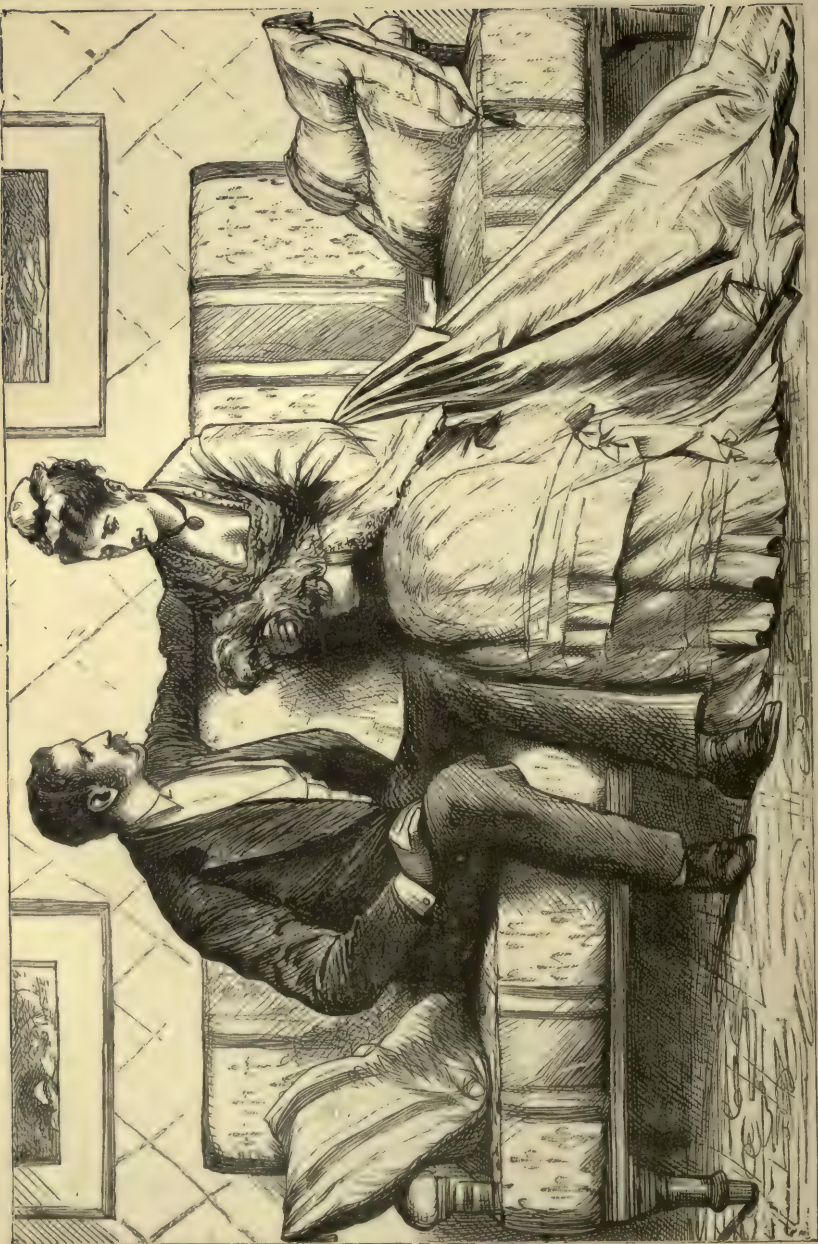
Her next move was the essentially feminine one of seeing whether she could not induce her husband to remember those idyllic days under Lord X.'s roof, and make him fall in love with her again. The bar to this was that Count Z. had never really been in love with her, but of this she was not aware. After all she was a well-favoured wench, with magnificent hair and shoulders, who looked mighty well in cerise or violet, and still better when she sat for her photograph in black silk, and with a pensive expression, intended to convey profundity of poetic thought. She had read Tennyson and the Lakeists, and, like most other governesses, could dash off a grammatical love-letter, loaded with quotations, points of admiration, scraps of philosophy (from Tupper), and passages underlined. Of these she indited not a few, for her husband's behoof, on mauve paper, emblazoned with coronet and escutcheon. At first the Count returned curt answers to them ; but finding they still continued, he lit his cigars with them, unread.

Stung to the quick at his silence, the ex-Miss Thompson thought she would play yet one more card, and, moved thereto partly by a melodramatic episode she had witnessed at some theatre, determined to rush off to Paris, surprise her husband, and throw herself into his arms. But she had forgotten the telegraph. Long before she had crossed the Channel the Count, apprised by Madame Marieneff, had betaken himself into seclusion; and on arriving at the Gare du Nord the Countess was greeted by one of her husband's friends, a polite and elderly Polish Prince, who had been deputed to express the Count's regret that urgent business had called him into the country, but who respectfully placed himself at the Countess's orders, to show her the wonders of the French capital.

After a week's weary sight-seeing, and drives in the Bois, under the escort of this courteous but always impassive grandee, Countess Z. returned to England, with rage and vengeance shooting fiery throbs through her veins.

Her first step on reaching London was to call on a solicitor of Gray's Inn, and inquire whether British law furnished no remedy for a grievance so anomalous as hers. The solicitor replied that she might certainly plead for a restitution of conjugal rights, and, if she could acquire proofs that her husband was acting unfaithfully to her abroad, she might apply for a divorce on the ground of desertion, &c. But the lawyer felt obliged to add that Count Z., being a foreigner, British courts of law would have little hold upon him. He might snap his fingers at citations; withdraw the handsome allowance he was making her; and if sentenced, after a divorce, to pay alimony, might refuse to do so, and throw the whole costs of the action on herself. Was her ladyship prepared to run these risks? asked the solicitor. Her ladyship looked uncomfortable; on second thoughts it was obviously wiser to rest on her 4,000*l.* a year and be thankful.

However, the solicitor had imparted to the ex-governess one grain of comfort, in that he had pooh-poohed Count Z.'s menaces about shooting. She had been moved to tell him that she stood in danger of her life if she did but speak a word of civility to a strange gentleman; and the lawyer had answered that, God be praised, there was yet a gallows-tree in Newgate—forgetting too readily, perhaps, as lawyers are apt to do, that if Count Z. were suspended by the neck, this fact, though reassuring to society at large, might not bring all the compensation desirable to his wife in her coffin.



COUNTESS Z. AND YOUNG MR. SMITH.

Nevertheless, Miss Thompson took heart of grace, and, feeling herself under the protection of the hangman, resolved that, since the abject appeals of love had had no effect on her husband's heart, she would try what a little jealousy could do. She set off to pay a visit to Mr. Thompson, her father, taking only her maid with her, and without loss of time embarked in a violent flirtation with a visitor at his house, young Mr. Smith, an officer of the Line. One night young Mr. Smith was picked up in a country road, beaten to a jelly, and with his nose in a puddle. When restored to his wits he stated that a pair of garroters had waylaid him; but the police asked how he could reconcile this version with the fact that he had lost neither watch nor money.

It subsequently reached the Countess's ears, by mere accident, that during the whole time of her sojourn in her father's house her two servants, Dobelwitz and Trikski, whom she believed to be in London, had been residing in the neighbouring town, not three miles from her. There was nothing to implicate them in the discomfiture of Lieutenant Smith, and she was reduced on this point to bare conjecture. But she owned to herself, with an inward shudder, that her feet stood, in truth, on slippery places, and that it behoved her to mind how she walked.

More than twelve years have now elapsed since Miss Thompson married the hero of Warsaw, and from first to last she has never made a slip. Madame Marieneff and the Poles still keep house for her, and between them all she leads the sort of life to which princesses of the blood and ladies of feeble intellect are subjected. Her enforced propriety has earned her a good name, however, and not a few admiring friends, who may suspect that there is some mystery at the bottom of her life, but know not what. She gives parties, and allays suspicions by remarking that she is expecting the Count home from day to day. She points to letters lying on the table, and alludes to some piece of information which they are supposed to contain, observing that the Count is an indefatigable and charming correspondent. She also professes—poor woman!—to have seen him 'six weeks ago,' or 'last season,' at Brighton or St. Leonards, and to have spent 'a delightful month' with him, though the real truth is that she has not once looked on his face since her wedding-day.

The Count's political proclivities being well known, he is always reported to be engaged in preparing a movement against Russia;

and the Countess adroitly plays her part as a good wife, intrusted with all her husband's secrets, by expressing Russophobic sentiments virulent to the intensest degree. In pursuit of this same plan she subscribes to all funds for the relief of sick and wounded Turks, in her husband's name as well as her own. She confesses an attachment to the Hungarian cause, pities the French and Danes, has a bust of Garibaldi in her drawing-room, and finds a good many warm things to say in behalf of all revolutionists and exiles. It is a dismal comedy she plays, but it must be owned she plays it well; and if she harbours—as it may well be supposed she does—sentiments of the most unquenchable hatred against all foreigners in general, and especially against Poles, she wisely keeps them locked up in that innermost corner of her heart, where men and women do best to confine those impulses which it would serve them nothing to lay bare.

VI.

ULYSSES AND PENELOPE.

THE gilded miseries of Countess Z. have their counterpart, but under a mitigated form, in the life of Penelope, wife of that charming but always absent soldier, Major Ulysses Gallivant, of the Staff. Penelope was a good wife at first, and adored Ulysses, till the latter grew tired of her fondling and sent her home to England, under the pretext that the climate of Malta, where he then resided, was not good for her. Evidently the fogs of London were preferable. Gallivant himself, however, thrived well in any climate where there were fair women and snug bachelor quarters. The man loved his ease. Marriage, after the few years' trial he had given it, seemed fraught with considerable drawbacks, not the least of which was that when his wife was present Gallivant could not flirt



to the top of his bent. He had a queer conscience, full of loopholes and turnings, and he had ended by persuading himself somehow that, since women may become such potent allies to a man in his career, it would be good for his wife as well as for himself that he should flirt. He would have argued in the same way as to the necessity for his getting regularly drunk, had he cared for drink. As it was, he often took champagne 'for his stomach's sake,' saying to himself that, as bread-winner of his little household, it was his duty above all things to sustain his health with good cheer. But he thought small-beer was good enough for Penelope.

Ulysses Gallivant was an arrant liar. He lied chiefly because he loved flattery, and must needs for ever be relating adventures in which he had taken a chief part, or explaining big schemes by which he proposed to do wonders for himself, Penelope, and the little ones. His adventures were mostly invented, and his schemes all came to nothing; but it was years before Penelope grew tired of hoping in him, and detected his incorrigible mania for fibbing. Lying is the one art in which men do not come to excel by constant practice. On the contrary, lying, to be long successful, should be practised sparingly, and never without reason. Gallivant could not do the simplest thing without enshrouding it with mystery, and telling lies to explain this mysteriousness. So it came to pass that every letter which he sent home to his wife was full of the most wondrous falsehoods as to what he was going to do, and why he did it. He was going east—perhaps he should be ordered west; he had become the confidant of his General; the most brilliant honours were awaiting him; he would be home with his wife at Easter, quite certainly—not later; or he was pining for a sight of her, and could not endure separation any longer. All this simply amounted to saying that U. G., who had promised to be home at Christmas, wanted to join a pleasant party who were going to leave Calcutta to winter in the Hills. At Easter, Gallivant had to join unexpectedly in an expedition to the frontier; and at midsummer he was ordered with despatches to Cairo. Up the Nile, down the Nile, on the field of battle, in the hunting-field, here, there, everywhere, Gallivant was always coming home, and never came.

This went on for years, and Penelope in her London lodgings had to make a decent show of continually expecting the truant to return. But women grow tired of waiting, and Penelope, who was fair, had suitors. *Tant pis* for Gallivant. The childish fibs which



he blew homewards, like inflated toy-balloons, very round and highly coloured, ceased at length to be novel or amusing. Gas,

gas, *toujours* gas, is apt to tire. Penelope could not let her youth be wasted in joyless languor. So long as she kept up appearances, she would assuredly be doing her duty quite as well as Ulysses did his; and if he were not satisfied, why, he might come home.

He has not come, and will probably not do so till some day, disease and disaster falling upon him, he will return to spend the remainder of a peevish querulous old age at the fireside of the wife whom he deserted. Then he will require nursing, and Penelope will have the joyful occupation of putting hot flannels on his back and feeding him with cough lozenges. One day he will have a fit, but recover; then another, but get well again. Penelope will have to waste all her last stock of good looks in tending him through his final struggles with death; till at length, when her release comes, and she dons her widow's cap, she will see tell-tale gray hairs frizzing out underneath it. The poor woman's liberty will have come too late. After living for years a husbandless wife, she will have to die a husbandless widow; for of course those suitors who crowded round her whilst Ulysses was away will have taken to flight on his return. Penelope's is a sad story; but then Ulysses was a sad dog, and there are, unhappily, many like him.





NOBLE LORDS.

I.

INTRODUCTORY.



THE British House of Peers rules the Queen and the kingdom, and seems likely to do so for a long time to come. This may not be written in the Constitution, and it might be denied by some credulous members of the Lower House, who affect to think that a seat in Parliament means power to legislate. The two Reform Bills, the Repeal of the Corn Laws, the increased circulation of newspapers, and the Ballot Act have not even scotched the ascendancy of the Peers: those

who have ever tried conclusions with them well know it. Instead

of ruling in the old way they make their influence felt after new fashions, and that is all the difference. In things ecclesiastical and civil, in politics, in commerce, in the magistracy, on the stock exchange, on the turf, and in the Press, they are paramount. Watch the strings which guide all the movements of enterprise, thought, or legislation in the Empire, and you will find noble lords pulling them. Owners of two-thirds of the land in the country, and holders, either in their own persons or in those of their relatives, of all the posts of dignity and emolument worth having, how can they be otherwise than omnipotent?

This being so, it may not be uninteresting to jot down some impressions of the various types of noble lords now or recently flourishing.



II.

THE MILLIONAIRE DUKE.

A SPLENDID type, this, the cream of the peerage, one who does not mix with the vulgar, and only dabbles in politics with the tip of his walking-stick, so to say, like a loungeer stirring a puddle.

The Duke of Heatherland is his name. He has estates in six counties, a yacht, a pack of hounds, a hundred horses, two domestic chaplains, and sixteen livings in his gift. He is Lord-Lieutenant of the county where his favourite castle stands, and became a colonel of yeomanry on attaining his majority, much like those Russian

princes (at whom Englishmen are very fond of laughing) who have a colonel's commission put into their cradles. His Grace is also chairman of various hospitals, agricultural, charitable, and literary societies; he holds exalted rank in a Freemasons' lodge, and is a Knight of the Garter.

What more could society do for the splendid creature? Had it made him a king, he would have been less happy. A king, forsooth! Why, monarchs envy his Grace, who holds in one of his hands as much power as they do in both, without being bored by any of the responsibilities or dull worries of Royalty. Does the Duke of Heatherland wish for the servile homage of the vulgar? Let him only mount his hack and ride at mid-day through the market-town which adjoins his estates: heads will be bared wherever he goes; aldermen will leave off quarrelling or lunching to run out on the pavement and catch his august eye as he lazily fingers his hat-brim; women will compare his calm cold glance to a ray of moonlight; and little boys will poke their fingers into their mouths from sheer abashment at the sight of him. But if his Grace prefers the applause of a larger multitude, the loud praises of newspapers, and so forth, let him only take a part in promoting one of the popular "fads" of the hour—such as the woes of the "unspeakable Turk," anti-vivisection meetings, schools for cookery, coffee-palaces, or artisans' dwellings, and he will be served with as much flattery as any stomach can swallow without nausea.

As to power, who is it that wants a post in the customs, a consulate, a commissionership in India, or a deanery? The Duke of Heatherland has only to nudge his old crony, the Prime Minister, and the boon is conferred without hesitation. The Queen would have to finesse for days to obtain a favour which his Grace gets for the asking; and, perhaps, if her Majesty requested such favours too often, the Premier would turn crusty on the subject of royal prerogative, whereas nobody has ever questioned the prerogative of dukes to gather as many of the plums of office as they have appetites for. A Premier who rode a-tilt at his Grace would find himself unhorsed sooner than he expected.

The Duke of Heatherland has not power of life and death, but he can socially smash an enemy till there is nothing left of him but the skin and bones. He can ruin, or he can inflict the milder penalty of making his foe's life absolutely burdensome, till the distraught creature flies abroad or hangs himself. To effect these



THE DUKE OF HEATHERLAND.

"Aldermen leave off lunching to run out and catch his august eye."

things he has only to whisper that so-and-so is a blackguard, and to express a grave surprise at meeting him in respectable houses. A foreign duke who thus behaved might be called to account by means of a cartel; but duelling is out of fashion in England, and a man who is blackened by one of the upper aristocracy must scrape off the blacking as he can, or be content to carry it on him to his grave. It is said that one peppery, but sensible gentleman, having on a hot day, and yielding possibly to the instigation of claret, mightily huffed his Grace by contradicting him, repented of what he had done on finding that implacable ostracism was to be the penalty of his rudeness. Making no bones about it, he contrived, thanks to the great man's valet, to get into the Duke's presence, and threw himself upon his knees on the hearthrug, vowing to remain there until he was forgiven. His Grace deigned to smile, and restored the penitent to social favour by saying to his toadies that B. was not a blackguard after all, but only a blanked idiot."

This was just like the Duke of Heatherland, who is a good-natured grandee, too well aware of his immense might to make vicious use of it. He would rather do a good thing than an unkind one, and really does not a little in the way of helping people who cannot help themselves. He once gave back a character and social standing to a cashiered officer who had offended Mrs. Grundy, while all London cried, "Bravo, Duke! Do it again, whenever you like." He passes for a philanthropist and a Liberal, and is generous with his money, which is the most uncommon form of Liberalism. Numbers of cripples are stumping about London with cork legs of his purchasing, for the One-legged Asylum is an institution of his founding. He also possesses a fire-engine of his own, and when a conflagration breaks out in a slum about Westminster, he may not unfrequently be seen, having a helmet on, and plying his hose with unimaginable energy on the ruins of a house that was hardly worth saving. Not devoid of humour withal, he was once heard to remark that it would be no bad thing if all the London slums were burned down, for then his brother Duke, he of Nodland, to whom most of them belonged, would be obliged to build new and better ones. But his Grace of Nodland, who frowned at this joke, had no difficulty in proving that dukes are not bound to take the lead in sanitary progress until they are gently pushed thereto by public clamour. If dukes innovated and did all the good they might do, how would they retain money sufficient to



make a stand on the day when the public called upon them for some concession which it might not please them to grant?

Duke Nodland owns a large acreage of London, for instance, including part of that busy district where newspapers are most conveniently published; and he can do a good deal against any print displeasing to him, by turning its proprietors summarily out of his premises. He is also the owner of a market which is a scandal to the town, and has been so any time within living memory, from the filthy and unwholesome state in which it is kept, the law naturally giving his Grace authority over the lives and health of his fellow-subjects, so that he only resorts to poison. Yet who knows whether the Duke may not some day be called upon to give up these privileges, and that he may even think it prudent to do so, after much pressure?

His Grace of Heatherland, however, at present stood corrected, for he well knows the uses of money. Though his income be twenty times greater than is needful for himself and his children, it is but common prudence to lay by and invest, so that children's children, cousins, nephews, and hangers-on, even to the fourth generation, may be prosperous folk, upholding the great House of Heatherland by the potency of gold. Why should not the Duke of Nodland act with equal prudence?

It was remarked by a shallow political essayist that the peers of England might have retained enormous power if they had systematically expended their money on objects of public good. They *have* retained enormous power, but it is precisely because they have been shrewd enough to keep their money in their own pockets. There are not wanting theorists who argue that rich men hold their incomes in trust for the general welfare; and if their lordships had been guileless enough to impoverish themselves in order to provide Great Britain with an additional number of museums, parks, open squares, and wholesome dwellings, it would only have been said that they had given with good grace, so as not to be forced to give by iron-handed Revolution.

The Duke of Heatherland, like the rest of his exalted order, is not in the least afraid of revolutions. He is hand-in-glove with illustrious revolutionists, and finds them the most tractable fellows alive. Garibaldi swears by him; so did many a refugee Frenchman in the days of the Second Empire. While the mobs were tearing up the park railings at the epoch of the last Reform Bill, his Grace, who happened to be riding by at the time, was loudly cheered; for did he not belong to the great Whig party, for whose behoof all this

waste of iron was being effected? and was he not the patron of Gladstone, and the benevolent friend of Bright? What can it signify to his Grace how many Reform Bills are passed, so long as they have no other effect upon himself than the last, which put his cousin into the Cabinet, brought another cousin into the peerage, promoted an old tutor to the episcopal bench, and girt the Garter about his own ducal leg?

More than one Tory could afford to be a Reformer at that price.



IN HEATHERLAND.

III.

POLITICAL LORDS.

MEN like the Duke of Heatherland are not professed politicians. They leave such noisy work to dukes who want money, to dukes' heirs who want name, but more generally to younger sons and hangers-on.

Lord Pudden is a peer who has gone in steadily for politics as a paying profession. A descendant of a law-lord, and married to the penniless niece of a ducal couple, he had connections enough to push him on, but not money enough to live sumptuously without doing

something for himself. Had he been very rich he would probably have been a spendthrift, for he was born with a soft head ; he was fond of praise, greetings in the market-place, women's homage, and good living. The coaching he got from prudent clerical tutors inflated his conceit not a little, but gave his mind a bent towards profitable employment. Plodding work at the University secured him a degree in honours, and from that moment his future was made.

Lord Pudden had only to show himself in the political arena, with his dull eyes and moony face, to be immediately enlisted by the Liberal chiefs, who know the value of a solid young lord, willing to incrust himself in departmental work. Lord Pudden was at once appointed to an under-secretaryship, which any one among five hundred members, chosen at hazard from Parliament, could have filled better than himself ; but in his own lustreless way he soon began to say and do things which a commoner dared not have done or said, and earned a lucrative reputation in consequence. The secret of a dry young lord's success consists in this, that sentiments which would be scouted as ridiculous, subversive, and impertinent if they came from a commoner, are held to denote originality and intellectual enlightenment when uttered by a peer. The commoner who assails aristocratic institutions is made to spend a hard time of it, but the lord who sneers at his own order passes for a sensible fellow.

Political theories so mean that a grocer's apprentice would disavow them ; a niggardliness with the public pence which causes all public work to be ill done ; and a peace-at-any-price spirit, which will hear of no patriotic movement for the consolidation of the Empire or the protection of the weak,—these are the prominent characteristics of Lord Pudden's great good sense. When he stands up to answer a question in the House of Lords he mouths out cynical aphorisms with the effrontery of a churl ; if tackled about a departmental abuse, he quibbles as a county-court attorney would be ashamed to do. He is never put in the wrong, for he twists facts about like a hawker peddling cheap ribbons, and he dodges away from a straight attack like an eel. Nobody ever caught him giving way to a noble impulse, labouring to do good, or helping to remedy an injustice. His liberal spoutings are mere wind, which, having been blown like a gale from greater hearts than his own, passes through his tight lips with the squeaking noise of air through a keyhole. He is a feeble echo of resounding words, a medium for circulating party bosh, a Turk's head set up for the underlings of

the opposite side to shy sticks at, his pate being so thick that there is no danger of its getting broken.

Lord Pudden, however, is a cunning fellow, else he could never have played his subordinate part to such perfection. Had he been born a few steps lower down the ladder he would have been content with a footman's place, without aiming at the butler's. Butlerships come to such as he in good time, when their hair is scanty and their wits have grown murky ; if they try to push forward too fast they get turned out of the pantry.

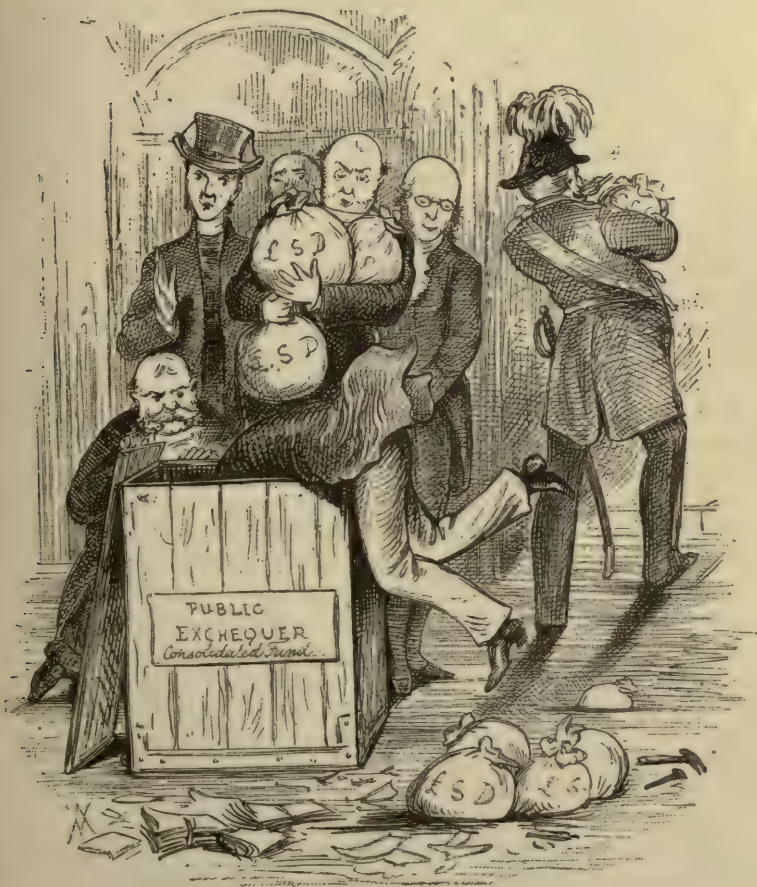
Lord Pudden had the sense to divine that he must sing small under the leadership of the party tenors and basses. He was a mere chorist, who, if indulged in a solo now and then, must take care not to pitch his voice above the normal diapason, and who must, above all things, hold the party music-book in his hand, to show that he was not piping anything of his own composition. If he had set up as a performer of original melodies he might, to be sure, have enjoyed a brief period of glory ; for some of the howlers and yelpers out of doors might have pressed a conductor's bâton into his grasp, and made him a leader of such independent concerts as are held under a tree in Hyde Park. But from that moment Lord Pudden would have been declared unfit for Cabinet music, and his utter collapse a mere question of time.

Lord Pudden was not cut out for the part of a chieftain, and even had he been possessed of ten times more talent than Nature had allowed him, the fact of his being a peer would have debarred him from those prominent popular posts which devolve upon the younger sons of dukes in times of public commotion—men like the late Lord John Bustle and the existing Lord John Banners.

Who has not read of the prowess of these two Johns, and laughed with the good broad laugh which comedy excites ? The one a Tory, the other a Whig, both were embodiments of those lively qualities which zoologists recognise in the bantam cock. They strutted and crowed ; they kicked up dust at each other ; they fought for grain and ate bushels of it ; they were a pair of as quarrelsome cocks as ever set a poultry-yard in a flutter ; but on the whole John Bustle was a gamier chanticleer than John Banners.

Johnny Bustle was dubbed leader of the first Reform Bill agitation, and he did lead it, much as a cork leads a stream which carries it along topsy-turvy. He was chosen because it was needful to have a Duke's son to give character to the movement ; and also

because it was essential that the peers who cast in their lot with the tagrag and bobtail should have a guarantee that they, and not the tagrag, were to reap all the profit of the movement. So the Reformers, having conquered, made Johnny Bustle a Secretary of State, and by-and-by Premier; and Johnny, looking on the horny-handed men who had laboured to hoist him so high, told them to rest and be thankful, whilst he parted all the spoils of victory among his kinsfolk and acquaintances. He forgot not a cousin or



a nephew in this royal distribution, which was carried on with but few intermissions for six-and-thirty years. The Bustles and the Preyers, the Sillyoafes and the Conyngfishes, the De Brownes and the Whitey-Brownes, all forming part of the great plum-devouring connection, were installed in every post where public moneys could be fingered. They became lords spiritual and temporal, commanders of armies and fleets, governors of colonies and ambassadors; they sucked the udders of the nation through every teat; nothing was done in Great Britain and her dependencies but by them and for them; so that it seemed, in truth, as if the greatest empire in the world had been created to no other end than to make them all fat. As for the thinkers and workers, who had made the pulse of the nation beat at the name of Reform—the Tom Moores and the Sydney Smiths, the Leigh Hunts and the Landors—they were left to suck their thumbs in the shade. Tom Moore, however, had 300*l.* a year flung to him like a bone.

Meanwhile Johnny Banners had been at work on the other side, perspiring with all his might to hold up the big blue standard of the Tories in the fearful gale. Unlike the other John, he had not been elected to his office of flag-bearer; he had volunteered for it, crying, 'I am the only man to hold the thing high. Give it me!' He took it with both hands, and its mighty flaps knocked him down. He picked himself up, and looked a worthy figure, as he battled for a moment against the breeze, all his hair on end, and his mouth gasping inaudible war-cries. Finally, when the breeze upset him a second time, and it became evident that his muscles had no strength to uphold the flagstaff, he sat down to weep, and talked of becoming a monk. This is the same Johnny Banners who afterwards recovered from his despondency, was intrusted with the Cabinet office of looking after the public parks and statues, and was eventually promoted to be Commander-in-Chief of the postmen of St. Martin's-le-Grand.

But this brings his lordship to the category of political old fogeys, a category which we will handle presently. Meanwhile, we have a few words to say about other great Political Lords, who, being neither Heatherlands nor Puddens, have even more to do with managing and mismanaging our affairs for us.

Among the Parliamentary Lords prominently in view is Earl Manville, who is a noble exemplification of the proverb that it is

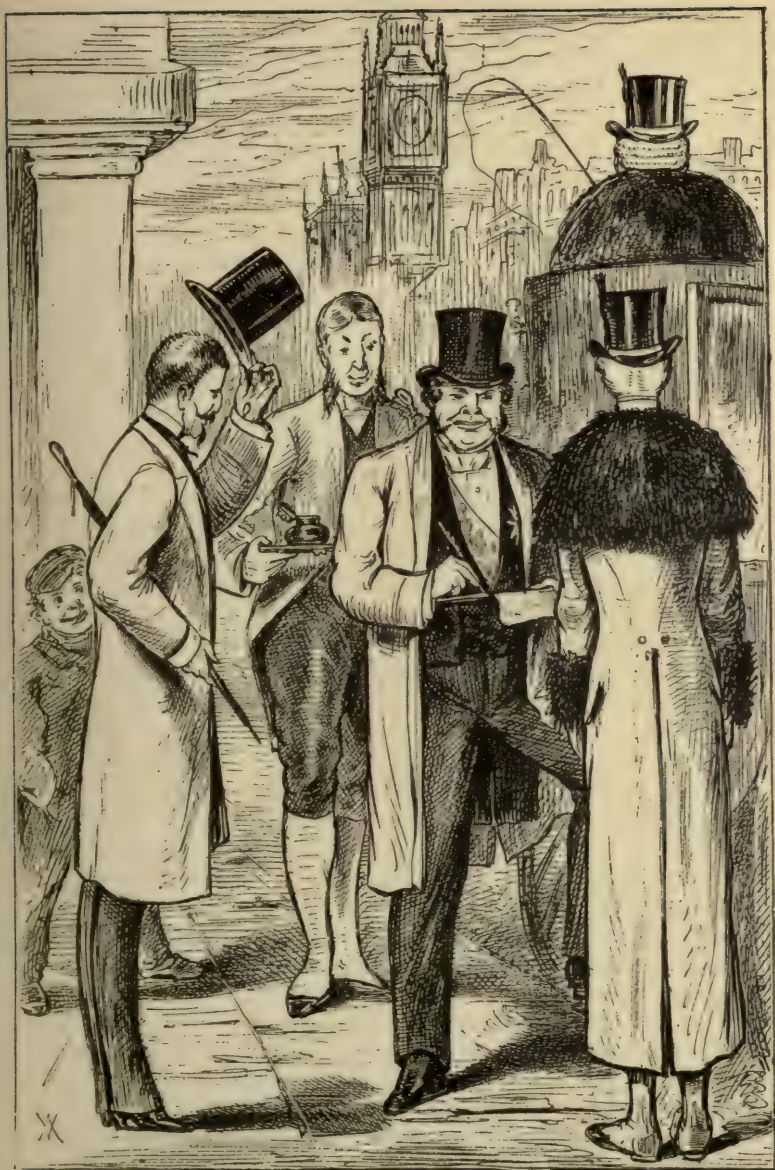


LORD JOHN BANNERS.

better to be born lucky than rich. He has had everything that is worth having in the official way, even the refusal of the Premier-ship; and his career as a successful placeman will only end with his life. Not a man of any far-shining ability, but a person of



singularly good sense, and a very round man. Easy and self-indulgent to a degree almost beyond belief, so that to get his signature to a treaty it was necessary on one occasion for the French Ambassador to dodge him; and he did what was required of him with one foot resting on the step of his carriage, in which he was going out to dinner. He was then Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and M. Thiers wanted to be able to announce the actual signature of the treaty to the French Chamber on the same evening. It was, however, a matter of complete indifference to Lord Manville. He will not be bothered. He tells amusing stories to the Queen;



SIGNING A TREATY ON THE WAY TO DINNER.

but it may be observed that he is seldom Minister in attendance on her Majesty at Balmoral, where the dinners are of dubious quality and amusement rare, while he himself has one of the best cooks in Europe. He has not the character of being a fast man, though he has rather loose and uncereemonious ways, such as sitting astraddle across a chair in the presence of ladies. Possibly the secret of his popularity is the geniality of his character, the plumpness of his aspect, and the fact that he is one of the best informed, and the least pedantic, men out.

Education he has none. He may have read a book, as Brummel once ate a pea, but it is doubtful. In no other country but ours would any one think of counting him in the ranks of eminent men ; and in England, had he not been a peer, he would never have been heard of beyond the precincts of a domestic circle, where he would have been liked for his kindness and easy nature. His natural place in society is that of a gentleman at large. He would have made a good country squire, and an equally good sleeping partner in an old-established business in town. He has a constitutional aversion to work.

It is pleasing to think of what a peerage can do for such a Briton. When only twenty years old he was appointed, without fuss or examination, to a rank which, in accordance with the rules of precedence, is superior to that of a colonel in the army. He was a member of Parliament at twenty-two, his father being still in the flesh as a peer and an Ambassador. Though he had never moved one step in the diplomatic service, he jumped at a bound from the post of junior attaché to that of Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, with a salary of fifteen hundred a year, at the age of twenty five. At thirty, on having succeeded to his title, he was made a member of the Royal Household and Master of the Buckhounds, also with a handsome salary and perquisites. He was raised to the dignity of Privy Councillor the same year, appointed one of the Commissioners of Railways (!) and a magistrate, having authority over the interests and characters of many of his fellow-subjects. At thirty-three he was named Vice-President of the Board of Trade, though knowing nothing whatever about trade, and Paymaster-General.

Subsequently a tiff between Prince Albert and Lord Palmerston made this very round and inoffensive man a Cabinet Minister and a principal Secretary of State, with a salary of 5,000*l.* a year and

patronage. He was then thirty-six. A year later he was appointed Lord President of the Council, an official who ranks immediately after the Lord Chancellor. In 1854 he was made Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster; and it was whispered that his lordship had become a considerable leaseholder under the Crown, whereat some murmurs. One month afterwards, also, the Earl, who was remarkable for his want of scholarship, was named a member of the Committee of Education. The following year he was appointed Ambassador Extraordinary to the Emperor of all the Russias, *and* Chancellor of the University of London. Next he was made a Knight of the Garter; and the University of Oxford, where he had never even passed his Little-go, solemnly conferred upon him the highest honour at its disposal, and gave him the degree of D.C.L.

Among the odds and ends he has picked up during his agreeable stroll through these happy hunting-grounds, are the following very nice things: He is Constable of Dover Castle and Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. The emoluments of this agreeable sinecure used to be estimated at 4,000*l.* a year for life in the time of Lord Manville's predecessor. They are now said to be less, or nothing; but I have never heard of a sinecure in noble hands falling off in value; and his lordship is not personally responsible for the statement that he enjoys less than those who have gone before him. Thus much is also certain, that whatever he may receive in hard cash for duties which are purely nominal, he is provided with one of the finest marine villas in the world at the national expense, and possesses a life interest in Walmer Castle, which nobody can deny.

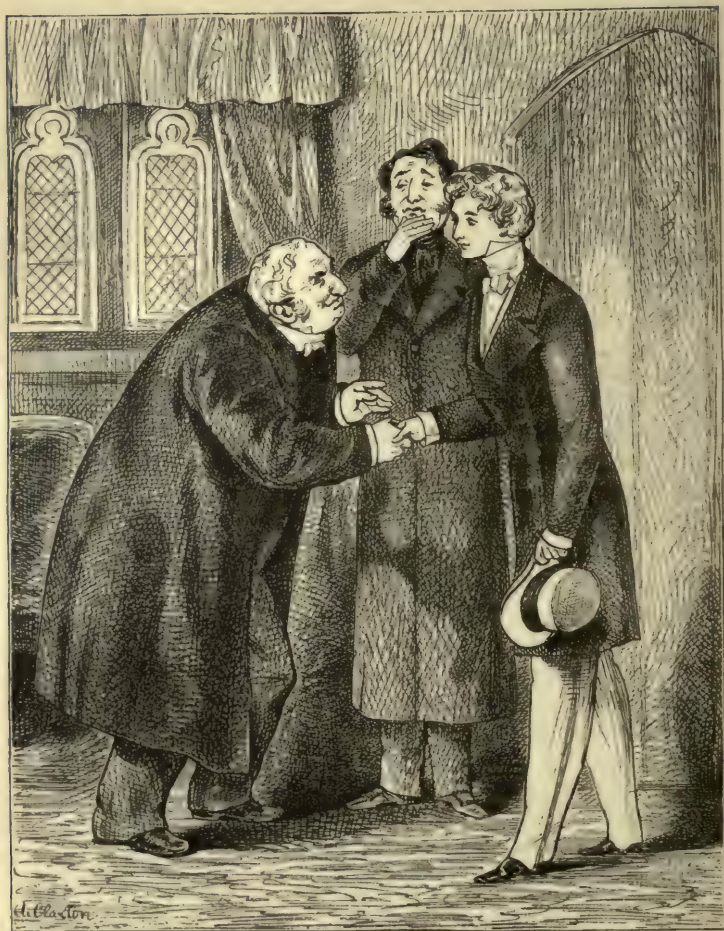
Earl Manville has been not only Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, but also Secretary of State for the Colonies, though he has never had any experience, or pretended to have any experience, of Colonial affairs. He was, moreover, Plenipotentiary at the Conference of London in 1871, *and* a member of the Royal Commission to Paris in 1877-8.

It may be noted, in passing, that this excellent nobleman has never said or done anything remarkable in the whole course of his life. His nickname among his intimates is 'Pussy,' and it is sometimes added that 'Pussy can scratch.' For the rest, he has passed his life in amusing himself without noise or scandal; and he owes all the honours and dignities which have devolved upon him to the charming accident that he is an Earl.

The Right Honourable Achan-Jericho-Smith, Earl of Bethaven, is a very different sort of person from the Noble Lord just mentioned. He was a surly ill-conditioned lad, with a furtive look, who early made his mark in society by a method unusual. The mode he selected for distinguishing himself was that of levying benevolences; and it became absolutely necessary to speed him from the most lord-loving school in the world. The head-master waited on his father (who damned him heartily for his impudence), and humbly protested that there was no help for it. He even shed tears, so great was his reverence for the Peerage. But the thing had got wind. Bethaven (who was then Lord Babylon) had been too generous with his schoolfellows' pocket-money, and the total amount of the involuntary contributions he had drawn from them exceeded a hundred pounds. The thing had, therefore, gone too far to be hushed up; but it is an interesting example of our national lord-worship that many of the hopeful young gentlemen (as they loved to be called) knew that Babylon put communistic theories into practice, but 'let him go on, because they were in the same set, and it seemed as if they knew him at home.'

Even these little Britons were prepared to pay for a lord's acquaintance; and the head-master, who was held responsible for Babylon's abrupt departure, received threatening and furious letters from all parts of the country. Several of them were shown to this writer; and certainly their language was strong. One correspondent, dating from Cumberland, compared him to Richard III.; another—probably a lady, from the handwriting—called him an 'ogre,' which she spelt, possibly by a *lapsus calami*, 'oger.' However, it does not hurt anybody to be called names; and it does hurt a company of boys to have a 'squire of the night's body' among them; so the head-master's decision took effect. Of course, another high-class school was eager to receive the youthful misdemeanant; for his father had a great deal of Church and miscellaneous patronage. The boy, also, had good abilities of a certain sort; and being of a shy surly disposition, he spent most of his time with books. As his father, however, was Chancellor of Wycliffe University, it was not thought prudent to enter him there; and he was sent to Newton, where, being aided by the natural deference to rank which is so praiseworthy a characteristic of our college dons, he took a first class in classics.

It was not considered expedient to bring forward Lord Babylon



very early. A strange ill-luck seemed to haunt him. The Duchess of Dillwater lost a bracelet after dining in his company. Lady Tabitha Trumpington, who had a tongue, lost her jewel-case while staying at the ancestral seat of Bethavens, and had to be comforted with hard cash. At last there was a burglary in his own father's house, and a then famous detective was summoned, upon which Lord Babylon started on his travels.

He went to America, where an odd adventure befell him. Meeting one day a west-country man who was very curious, the following conversation took place between them :

American (*loquitur*) : "How do you get your living now? You don't look up to much, you don't, thar now."

Lord Babylon, with some hauteur : "I have an allowance from my father, the Earl of Bethaven."

A. "And who's he?"

L. B., with still more hauteur : "An English peer."

A., with a keen look : "Ah, but suppose he was to bust up, what would you do then?"

Happily for Great Britain's glory, our sublime customs of primogeniture and entail prevent any danger of a noble earl busting up, and to this hour the necessity of personally earning a sixpence has never presented itself to Lord Babylon. If it did, he would probably reply that he had no need to earn it. At twenty-five he came home attended by a lady of the French nation, and several small children. Had he been plain Mr. Smith, he would not probably have been admitted as a guest into any decorous English, still less into any decorous Scotch, home. Let us now consider what was done for him, because he had a handle to his name, and was heir to a peerage.

Before his return to England he had been elected a member of Parliament, being then twenty-two years old. His constituents could know nothing about him, save that he was an Earl's son, and held eccentric opinions on the law of personal property. My lord treated them as they deserved. After a maiden speech on molasses (demonstrated to be the question of the age), he set off for the East to amuse himself in his own way. To induce him once more to bless England with his presence, he was appointed to a high office, on the steps of the Cabinet, with a salary of 1,500*l.* a year. About a couple of months after he had been gazetted, he condescended to appear in Downing Street. Father and son were at this time dividing 6,500*l.* a year of public money between them. The figures afterwards rose to 10,000*l.*, for the British public showed a touching fidelity to the house of Jericho-Smith. Month after month society smiled or shrugged its shoulders at some new escapade of Babylon's, and each escapade was followed by the grant of a new dignity to the hero of the sorriest anecdotes which ever illustrated the history of the peerage.

Honours were heaped up over his dishonours—if, happily, they might only hide them. Our oligarchy had chosen its part. He was one of them, and should be not only protected, but glorified. Half measures in his case were impossible; and recourse was unflinchingly had to heroic measures. He was proclaimed to be a man of genius. All of a sudden the newspapers began to sing his praises with a suspicious alacrity; but simple Britons read and believed. They applauded when the greatest statesman of the time asked Babylon (then of the ripe age of twenty-nine) to be his colleague at a moment big with the fate of the country; and thenceforth nothing was considered too good for a man who had never shown spirit or forethought, eloquence or wit. He was set over all the pro-consulates of the Empire; he was pitted against Bismarck and Gortschakoff; he was made trustee of national treasures, and member of commissions on every subject under the sun. He has meddled with the organisation of our army and our universities, with our sanitary regulations and our mercantile law. To say that he has muddled would be but expressing half the truth.

Lord Bethaven spends no end of time with Blue-books, but his mind is of an incurably indolent turn. When he meets a difficulty he passes it over, and can always find twenty reasons for doing nothing. His party was long in opposition; and, as his duties then consisted in finding fault with the acts of others, which is always easy work, his incapacity long escaped observation. At length he was placed in a position of real responsibility and power, and broke down completely. England was well-nigh involved in his fall. His own kinsman upbraided him in Parliament with his cowardice, and, in a studied insult, compared him to the infamous Titus Oates, the least veracious character of whom English annals make mention.

Not only has he proved himself an inefficient Minister; his conduct in office has suggested doubts as to whether his reasoning faculties were in proper working order. When publicly called to account before our judges on charges affecting his personal probity, he set complaint at defiance by demurring on the ground of privilege to the jurisdiction of our law-courts. Nay, more, when the Queen's Majesty personally interceded with him in favour of a public servant whom he had notoriously wronged while in office, he turned the prerogative of the Sovereign into mockery.

And yet he does well to be cynically contemptuous of the dictates

of justice and loyalty. The judges take his part. The Sovereign is compelled to offer him the Garter, that my lord may have the satisfaction of refusing it. Such baubles may suit a Wellington or a Palmerston; Bethaven is above them. He never mingles in the sports or pastimes of men of his own rank. He does not hunt or shoot. He was never a cricketer, and he runs away from the society of women. It was noticed when he last held the seals of office, that he resigned his place as soon as the work thrown upon him put his sanity thoroughly to the test. So long as he could dawdle over unimportant business, leaving the rest to his underlings, power had charms—ineffable charms—for him; but the instant he got into difficulties, which obliged him to think and to act, he caught fright and bolted from the Ministry.

It has been estimated that the income of Lord Bethaven, from land alone, is 600,000*l.* a year. He is said to spend over 10,000*l.* annually in advertising himself, and is therefore frequently designated as the coming Premier. But he is astute enough in his madness to keep aloof from the premiership so long as there is any danger of incurring troublesome responsibilities with it. He will perhaps be set up one day as the nominal leader of a Coalition Ministry of "all the talents." It needs only a figure-head for such a post, and a thickly gilt figure-head does better than any other.

The most conspicuous figure of the House of Lords, within recent memory, was the Earl of Sparklemoor, long time known as Mr. Benjudah. There was a strong melodramatic flavour about all he did or said. His conduct was a riddle to the foolish, a subject of interest or amusement to the wise. He presented the strange sight of a gifted and imaginative man, of quick feelings and faithful affections, who had succeeded in English public life, but who was totally devoid of sympathy with our national character, and who had a contempt which he did not care to conceal for our habitual modes of thought and action. He was in many respects a sublime dreamer, a man of high authoritative ways, a Strafford, not a Russell; and he considered himself rather the Grand Vizier of an Eastern potentate than the responsible servant of a bustling and commonplace democracy. Yet he died the most popular man in England, the favourite of the Court, the idol of the City, and so beloved by the people that Englishmen offered to have their blood transfused into his veins when his pulse waxed feeble, that a part

of their very lives might lengthen his, were it but for a single day. No tribute so honest and glorious was ever before offered to a statesman in any country; nevertheless, there are still doubters who question whether he was ever really in earnest during the whole of his political career.

Many who saw him walk stooping to his seat in the House, with a sardonic smile on his lips, as if he were relishing a secret joke suggested by the platitudes of some prosy Whig orator, declared that he had the face of Old Nick. His resemblance to a venerable pawnbroker in go-to-synagogue attire was certainly remarkable, especially when he had his hat on. Some pious peers looked upon him with an aversion which they would have been shy to confess, but which troubled their consciences. He used to produce the same effect upon the Quakers and Methodists in the House of Commons. They would nudge one another and exchange piteous glances when he rose to chastise them with that scorpion tongue of his, whose stings have often left unhealing wounds. For 'Is this man not a Jew?' they argued. 'And, what is worse, a Jew who, as it is said, became renegade to the faith of his fathers, merely that he might not belong to a religion which would have placed him under social disadvantages? So, in shocking truth, he has no religion at all; yet this is the political juggler who for years has led the Church and State party; and now sits the acknowledged, trusted champion of a Protestant aristocracy, after having been the esteemed Prime Minister of a Protestant Queen.'

There is enough in such thoughts to make earnest Nonconformists shiver; but the honest Christian hatred which they cherished towards Lord Sparklemoor came also of the undisguised contempt which he presumed to entertain for *them*. He exposed their evil malignity, enviousness, uncharitableness, their want of brains and tact, their hypocrisies and corrupt ambition, as no other man could have done or would have dared to do. He sprinkled ridicule upon them like vinegar, and covered their mouths with pitch-plasters. That once obstreperous person Mr. Bright might have risen up to be a party leader but for him; as it was, Mr. Benjudah's ruthless exposures of his illiterate bumptiousness, exaggerations, and amazing ignorance compelled the disgusted Quaker to begin learning history at an age when men have generally done with school-books. Mr. Chamberlain had been crowing very hard on his Birmingham eminence before he strutted into the poultry-yard at St. Stephen's:

but one encounter with the Tory chanticleer sent him sore and crest-fallen into a corner, whence he has only dared to protrude his diminished comb at cautious intervals ever since. Sir William Harcourt, who has not quite the guilelessness of the dove, early took care to make a friend of Mr. Benjudah. He sparred with him at times in an amicable way, but never showed temper or impertinence in these encounters; on the contrary, he often expressed, in somewhat lively terms, his admiration for that brilliant master of irony, whose thrusts he feared, and by thus humbling himself earned a claim to good-natured forbearance. A wind-bag must needs avoid running amuck at a stiletto.

The Tory party accepted Mr. Benjudah's leadership because he compelled them to do so by his superiority. It was not the allegiance of love, but that of fear, which was given to the 'jewelled coxcomb in ringlets,' who had the combative courage of a bantam, and always selected the strongest enemies for his fierce onslaughts. No man who had raised a laugh against Mr. Benjudah once could do so a second time with any sense of comfort, unless, indeed, he were a person too lowly to merit the honour of reprisals. But what marvel is it that Mr. Benjudah should have exercised himself with invective and irony, as some of his Venetian ancestors may have done with the rapier and dagger? They were his only weapons; for in the rowdy battles of politics a man's genius counts for little if it be not backed with personal courage and a keen ambition. Genius may serve a man as a trumpet to sound a charge with; but unless the trumpeter can make use of his arms as well as of his instrument of music, he stands a good chance of being overlooked when the spoils of victory come to be divided. Now it was never Mr. Benjudah's purpose to go *too-tooting* for nothing.

One of the characters in *Vivian Grey* says to the hero of that novel: 'Make them fear you, and they will kiss your feet. There is no act of treachery or meanness of which a political party is not capable; for in politics there is no honour.' The truth of this remark has often been proved at the expense of those communities for whose benefit politics are supposed to be conducted by placemen anxious only to benefit themselves. Party government in England is a disorderly system, by which two factions, separated by no very vital differences of opinion, struggle for power by pompous words and ignoble acts. Tories and Liberals, pelting one another with fragments of the Constitution, according as it may serve their



THE JEWELLED COXCOMB IN RINGLETS.

purpose, have none of them, as a rule, any principles which they will stand by to the death. The Tories know very well that, when once any innovation has been taken up as a party question by the Liberals, its enactment is only a question of time, and of short time; and the Liberals know very well that their only means of keeping the Tories unpopular, and of ousting them from office when they

occasionally get there, is by recklessly attacking institutions which in former times they have admired and defended. No institution is safe, and no consistency of principle is possible, with such a loose game. The Tories, when they oppose some crude measure suddenly started by their opponents, are threatened with all the fury of an agitated rabble if they resist; whereas, if they surrender, or take up one of the Liberal measures by way of amending it, they are savagely taunted with having betrayed their principles.

Under such circumstances, a man who is not tied to any particular party by family associations may fairly tack himself to what faction will best serve his interests; and if he makes a mistake in his first choice, there is no reason in the world, so far as the precedents of political morality hold good, why he should not go over to his former rivals. Mr. Benjudah, at the outset of his career, when still a very young man, gave himself out as a Reformer; but, finding he was not likely to make rapid progress in the ranks of a party which is always overstocked with struggling adventurers, he joined the Tories, who seemed more disposed to appreciate his genius and to value his services; and he has stuck to them through good and evil fortune ever afterwards, that is, for nearly forty-five years.

His latter-day rival, the hysterical Mr. Paradyse, has never shown such consistency of conduct or such fortitude in adversity; and yet, by a ludicrous irony of fortune, he has won a character as the better moralist of the two. Mr. Paradyse never held an opinion which he would not recant when it served his ambition to do so. He has constantly let himself be hurried onward, that he might seem to keep the lead of the men who were pushing him, and get first into Downing-street when the loaves and fishes were going to be parted. A more self-seeking statesman never existed; but then, in a religious country, he was saved from failure by his assumption of the most earnest sanctimoniousness. Pronouncing sonorous homilies; talking of conscience and conversions, which conversions always came just at the right moment to bring him into office; reading the Sunday lessons in a country church, whilst his heart overflowed with envy and uncharitableness to all mankind who in any way thwarted his personal aims—thus did Mr. Paradyse win honour from a section of the British public. He used the Bible as his stepping-stool, and heaped up tracts when he wanted to climb still higher. But Mr. Benjudah could not have adopted these droll antics, even had he tried it. He was unscrupulous too, but his unscrupulousness was

of a different order. In matters of religion he was, perhaps, sincerer than his antagonist; for he always had a mysterious belief in the governance of the world by Divine agencies, and a fine insight into the benefits which mankind has at different times derived from the ascendancy of a strong Church, which does not mean the ascendancy of hundreds of howling sects.

The truth is, Lord Sparklemoor was an Italian Jew, brought up in England, who had passed through an attorney's office. His earliest education included the queer experiences of a Dublin money-lender; and he was just what might have been expected under such conditions—an extremely sharp customer. His mind was Italian, a tricky meretricious mind. His impudence was English, and he was very impudent. His mental endowments were not to be compared with those of the great intellects inspired by the great hearts of noble Italians. His tastes were rather of the courier or *laquais de place* order, fond of gold-laced caps and false glitter of every kind, and naturally inclined to what is gaudy and deceitful. So in like manner his impudence was not the cool effrontery of a Chesterfield or Palmerston, both extremely impudent men. It was that of Wilkes, altogether of a lower and coarser sort. Mr. Benjudah's sauciness seemed always put on for show, and came from his tongue only, not from his mind. He would fawn one day upon a man whom he had virulently abused but a little while before; because he never in his heart despised any one who was powerful, and might possibly be of use to him. His genuine contempt was all for the weak and foolish, though he knew that fools have their uses too, and he often used them.

Lord Sparklemoor owed most of his success to these *laquais de place* qualities. He was sincerely obsequious to rank and titles, and made himself both useful and agreeable to several scions of great houses. Such men really govern England, and he could not have done without them. He charmed them and their followers by repeating their favourite platitudes in fluent highly-coloured language. The same trick is played every day upon respectable British families by the smooth-tongued couriers who have charge of them. And it is a trick which must always pay so long as the rich and indolent love to be flattered. Then Mr. Benjudah, when he had attracted high-born young men by his plausibility, wormed secrets out of them, extracted pledges in unguarded moments, and inspired terror in their minds ever afterwards. A noble Duke, writing to his

younger son, alluded to the 'pernicious sorcery' which Mr. Benjudah seemed to have exercised over the latter; and a young nobleman, writing to his father, said, 'I allowed myself to slip like a toy into Benjudah's hands, and now he holds me.' On the other hand, Mr. Benjudah had a Jew's gratitude for services rendered, and a Jew's remembrance of injuries. Those who served him well he never forgot, nor those who crossed him either.

His service was the best that England has ever offered to ambition or to greed. No previous Minister had ventured to bestow rewards so various and splendid on his personal adherents. What a gorgeous list can be made with but a few of them! He gave an Imperial crown, constant homage, and real power in return for the tardy favour of his Sovereign; he provided the most magnificent pageant in our history for the Heir to the Throne; he distributed profuse gifts and eloquent praises among all the Royal Family. He had rich sops always ready for approved courtiers. He conferred a dukedom on a fashionable acquaintance who had pleased him; a Garter upon a refractory colleague who had made absolute submission to him. He assigned eighty-four thousand pounds in one lump to his bankers as commission on a state financial transaction; he threw twelve thousand pounds a year to each of a pair of insignificant men-of-all-work—poor creatures both of them, and mere detrimental hangers-on to the skirts of his greatness; he paid a comfortable income for an opportune vote at an election for a small borough; and first set the generous precedent of bestowing a peerage on his private secretary. He made the fortunes of his favourites as with the wand of an enchanter; and while the paths of his followers were rendered pleasant, politicians ventured upon slippery ground indeed who came athwart him. Gentleman Malmesbury, old gentlewoman Smallpole, and poor daft Lord Furby tumbled headlong, and vanished out of public sight that way.

The wonder, therefore, is, not that he succeeded in obtaining such objects as he proposed to himself—place and pay, titles and authority. It would have been a marvel had he failed to do so. If it be objected that he did not climb to the top of the social and official tree by orthodox methods, one must remember that Mr. Benjudah could not afford to play the game of politics with the chivalrous courtesy of the high-born party-man, such as one finds in books rather than in real life. He was bound to win or to give it up. He could not afford to wait. He was thirty-five before he

made a rich marriage, and was by that time deeply and dangerously in debt. It is said that he had pawned some of his influence to come by promising to obtain a government appointment for somebody who had lent him money. At any rate, he had been leading a gay and somewhat dissipated life, without having very safe sources of income. His novels bear traces of his shifts and his longings. No prescient tailor like the Mr. Vigo of *Endymion* dressed him on credit; and his clothes cost him a deal of money. He also had all the luxurious fancies, the secret hunger after wealth, which run in the blood of his race.

It must be remarked, however, that when once Mr. Benjudah had married well, and was secure from want, he exhibited his Jewish instincts unmistakably by living with almost ridiculous parsimony. The Jew is ostentatious, but thrifty at the same time. He freely spends the pounds which may serve him to show-off, but is frugal of the pence which disappear unnoticed. So while Mr. Benjudah did not hesitate to be extravagant in personal adornment and in entertainments where he received the great, he would have but one fire in his house, to save coal and forbade the servants to light the lamp in the hall when no visitors were expected, that the gas might not be consumed unprofitably. He saved money, and invested it well. A lucky inheritance put him in possession of a landed estate. At a critical point in his fortunes he unexpectedly received fifty thousand pounds in money. The objects of a man's ambition become vastly easier of attainment with such helps. He became rich, without appearing to be so; for he gave little away, so that nobody might be tempted to trumpet his bounties, and bring beggars to his doors. He loved high-priced wines (in moderation) and consummate cookery as well as any man, and did ample honour to such things when dining out; but at home his fare was of the simplest. He would have thought it stupid to uncork a bottle of Château Lafitte for his own refreshment.

Thus here are all the characteristics of the wondrous Hebrew people, who can put a rein on such propensities as would lead them nowhither; and they are characteristics which would insure success in any walk of life. Courage, caution, shrewdness, culture, wealth; a brilliant imagination, cool judgment to keep it in check; a handsome presence, a silvery tongue, and dauntless self-confidence. What more can a man desire to fight and win with? If Mr. Benjudah had started as a banker, lawyer, or clergyman, he could not,

with such talents as Nature gave him, have done otherwise than prosper. Few men have owed so much to Nature and so little to Fortune as he. He created opportunities, and swiftly caught all



that came within his reach; but they came slowly and seldom. He had to slave for nearly forty years in the House of Commons before he became Prime Minister with effective power; and by that time much of his early force and health were gone. Then, too,

Nemesis threw across his path, to mar his schemes and rob him of the fruit of his victories, his noisy enemy, Mr. Paradyse.

It is a thousand pities for England that Lord Sparklemoor did not come to power when in the prime of life, and remain in office for years. This might have been his fate under a monarchy really monarchical, or under a Republican democracy; and England would have derived much advantage from being governed by a man who understood the art of ruling men better than any politician of his time. It was a ludicrous result of our party-government system that the brilliant orator and statesman, versed in all the wiles of statecraft, should have had to fritter away his talents for years and years in profitless opposition, whilst repeated innings of power should have fallen to the hysteric, incompetent Mr. Paradyse, who has never been able to govern his own temper, much less to lead a party or rule a nation. Under the peevish wayward rule of this so-called Liberal chieftain all institutions of the realm have fallen into discredit, and the House of Commons most of all. Queen, Lords, Church, Corporations, have all been made to feel that they exist only on sufferance, till it may please Mr. Paradyse to egg on the mobs against them; and meanwhile the Lower House of Parliament, having no firm hand to control it with a dignity which need not have excluded freedom, has had to submit to the disgrace of Speaker's *coups d'état* and to wholesale gaggings and expulsions of its members.

Under the governance of such a man as Lord Sparklemoor neither England nor Liberalism would have fallen into such scrapes and disrepute. It matters nothing that his lordship had faults; his qualities were those of a governing mind. He knew what pleases men, what moves them; what aims should be those of a great nation; and what achievements are within the power of a strong one. He was both supple and firm, ingenious and patient. His policy would have been found economical, if it could have had a fair trial, because it would have spared Europe the wars which Mr. Paradyse has caused again and again, by showing his unwillingness to fight. It would have been a more elevating policy, too, as regards the tone of thought of the nation, because the ethics of the Liverpool counting-house, which Mr. Paradyse has so successfully infused into Liberal politics, have served to make the people at once sly and base, sceptical and cynical. To hear an average Liberal politician talk of national interests or grandeur nowadays is like hearing an

ignorant pedlar state his opinion about a pyramid: 'What is the use of it? What will it fetch? To what end this waste of stone and bricks?' Lord Sparklemoor never talked in this strain about a pyramid.

Mr. Paradyse would have been fine as an Opposition leader, with some laws against treason-sedition to keep him in gentle curb, and with Mr. Benjudah at the helm of affairs. But, as the foregoing lines show, this proper apportionment of positions was denied to the two men by reason of England's very peculiar and impractical system of government. Mr. Benjudah could not, in a few years, win the public confidence necessary to make him a ruler. A peer's son, with but half the genius he possessed, could have become Prime Minister at twenty-five; but the 'Jew boy's' origin stood against him, and dogged him with reproach through the whole of his career even to its close.

This must be repeated, and repeated with the aggravating circumstance, that those who have abused Lord Sparklemoor most on account of his ancestors' religion are the men who most loudly use religious toleration as a party cry. The hubbub about his lordship's unscrupulousness is all mere moonshine; for it cannot be contended that Pitt, Palmerston, or Melbourne were men of very nice scruples; and yet an admiring nation chose to obey them when alive and to honour them when dead. As to the scrupulousness of Mr. Paradyse, an opinion has already been given on it.

It is probable, however, that now Lord Sparklemoor is gone he will get honour too. His career will be looked upon as an example at once mysterious and striking, of what perseverance can do. England has always been prone to revere men who climbed to high mountain-tops, even though they did little on their way thither beyond climbing; and not much either when they got to the summit, except wave a flag and laugh in the faces of those who had predicted failure. In the privacy of his meditations, Lord Sparklemoor was probably satisfied enough with what he succeeded in accomplishing; and perhaps thought he had not played out his last card. The embarrassments of his enemies must have caused him some delight, because, as they had never been generous to him, he had no reason to feel any sympathy for them. He was, after all, still much like an alien grandee among a people whom he never much loved—an Alberoni, a Mazarin—a man who has spited his foes by succeeding, and who, even after his falls, remained enigmatical and terrifying.

There must have been something in Lord Sparklemoor's mere smile to make Mr. Paradyse wince with a self-consciousness of inferiority. The latter may well have said of the former, 'If I had his cool genius!' and the former of the latter, 'If I had but his opportunities!'

Never had a man better chance of doing something worthy in the sight of God and man to be done than Lord Wreckworth. His very presence contributed something to his advantages, for he looked the best type of a nobleman—handsome, gracious, and well mannered according to the English standard, which measures by kind bluntness rather than by polish. He had been trained, too, in politics, was a skilful debater, and a consummate master of 'pointless' invective. He could both persuade those who were on his side already, and overawe men of feeble talking powers. No man's smile was more winning than that of Robert Neville; and few cared to advance within reach of his mordant sarcasm. He had no need of a peerage, and would have obtained as good a place in front without it, though not so quickly. He had won his spurs in parliamentary warfare long before he became a Marquis; and as his nominal father had reasons for keeping him at a distance, he got most of his bread and all his butter from the newspapers. It was he who first made the *Saturday Review* a power, and he has always had an active hand in the press.

He seemed, therefore, very early marked out for distinction; and when he succeeded to the marquisate, about a dozen years ago, he became immediately one of the most notable men in England. Though not of the ancient Neville blood, he came of a good stock by his mother's side, and gave early proof of an inborn aptitude for public business. All he had to do for his country and his fame was to be honest and true; but here was the hitch. He was a crooked-minded man, incapable of looking straight before him.

He had, in fact, a moral squint. When required to act fairly, he first shirked the question before him, and then, if he could not get clear away from it, took to official rigmarole. There was no such thing as a plain 'yes' or 'no,' or an intelligible reason, to be got out of him. When worsted in an argument, instead of candidly allowing himself to be convinced, he resorted to dogged silence.

He had the second rank in the peerage, which he might at any moment, during his tenure of office, have converted into the first.



He had an ample fortune, even for a man of his rank, and had made it larger by methods which need not be here discussed; he held unquestioned power, had an unblemished private character, and a large section of honest gentlemen looked upon him as the 'Hope of England.' Yet he stooped to very pitiful chicaneries to

avoid doing right; and he jobbed. He bestowed one of the great viceroys on a dolt and something worse, for no other reason save that he held prominent rank in the Peerage. He did so in spite of all protest, and with a full knowledge of his nominee.

An awful famine and a revolt followed this abuse of patronage.

The Governor left the famine to take care of itself, merely writing an ungrammatical letter to the Lord Mayor about it; and under his stupid maladministration people died of hunger in tens of thousands. His Excellency also went to look personally after the revolt with a horse and gig; but could make nothing of it; and the fairest province of the empire, committed to his trust and care, became a scene of disorder and misery, entailing a waste of many millions of money. The Governor also sold many of the art-treasures in his government for old metal; and, in short, his behaviour became so crying a public scandal, as to suggest the question whether the place he filled should not be abolished, which might have been a means of getting rid of him.

After having betrayed the public trust committed to him so signally in one Government office, Marquis Wreckworth passed to the control of continental affairs, and again behaved with equal caprice and want of principle. He never appointed or promoted one single man of energy or ability; and even the tools he found readiest to his hand were employed or advanced for unintelligible considerations. His negotiations with foreign Powers and his dealings with Parliament recalled the days of Castlereagh, who frankly avowed that he accepted sham assurances from other countries in order to throw dust in the eyes of the House of Commons; and it came to be a generally-accepted maxim, that whatever might be the truth about any case before the public in which this Marquis was mixed up, it was not to be gathered from the most solemn official declarations.

‘The man is demented!’ said one who had felt a warm friendship for this Robert Neville, and saw with sorrow the ruin he was making of his reputation.

‘It is very possible,’ replied a Whig wirepuller dryly; ‘he has been bit by Dizzy.’

It is to be deplored that the Conservative peers should have chosen Marquis Wreckworth their leader, because a leader who cannot possess the confidence of any rational man among them will have but few had half-hearted followers, while impartial lookers-on

must plainly foresee that nothing but confusion to Conservative councils can come of the arrangement.

Moreover, Lord Wreckworth has been already tried and found wanting. As Chancellor of Oxbridge he has large and uncontrolled powers; but with the exception of having arbitrarily conferred the highest degree the University can bestow, on a personal adherent, he has done nothing. Not an abuse has ever been abolished, not an improvement begun under his direction.

Lord Maunder is heir to estates in fourteen counties; and what estates! More than one Crown Prince would be glad to change places with him, and enjoy his splendid expectations, to say nothing of the handsome fortune he already possesses. His houses are palaces; his lands are among the fairest in Britain. Of course he does not care about politics, and makes no secret of his good-humoured contempt for things in general. A lazy supercilious personage is Lord Maunder, and, therefore, he has been long since chosen leader of the Progress party in England. The choice is a wise one, for they do not wish to progress very far; and if they had a man really in earnest for their captain no one knows what might happen.

Lord Maunder took up politics as other Noble Lords take up the turf or Melton—for an amusement. He liked London life; and the nonsense going on in the House of Commons entertained him when he was in the humour for it. He took office, too, not because he cared to be bored by a posse of permanent official persons, always bent on having him perpetrate some abominable job, or defend some abuse which weighed heavily on their fellow-subjects, but because he knew a very agreeable woman who had said to him, ‘Why are you not in the Cabinet?’ ‘Ah!’ replied Lord Maunder, ‘why not? Hang it, Lottie, you have given me an idea. Perhaps it will be good fun.’

Whether his lordship has found it good fun or otherwise is not generally known; but probably he has got as much excitement out of it as he would have had out of any other game. It is a queer game, too, for a man of honour; and nothing has ever been whispered at the clubs against Maunder’s private character. He is rather a heavy sort of nobleman, with a negro underlip and a narrow head; but he is said to be a very good fellow, easy-tempered, companionable, not quick of comprehension, indeed, but pleasant and inoffensive. Needless to add that, with such qualifications, he



has already refused the Premiership, and that it will certainly be offered to him again.

I once heard this illustrious, long-descended, large-acred nobleman make a short speech on a simple question of right and wrong. It was reported in the newspaper record of parliamentary debates,

and it occupied only twenty-three lines of ordinary print ; but it contained twenty-seven distinct misstatements. I refreshed my memory next day by the perusal of his lordship's oratory, and counted up his deviations from the strict line of accuracy one by one till they reached the total above mentioned.

Of course his statement was official, and therefore of privileged elasticity, and the facts (!) were supplied to him quite hot from the department over which he presided, which was the War Office ; moreover the subject at issue was the very shocking case of a lieutenant-colonel who had spoken the truth about a Lord. But why should a long-descended large-acred nobleman, who will one day be a Duke if he lives long enough, and should at least be a man of honour at all times, consent to fib by the yard to defend departmental shortcomings ? One would really like to know, at this time of day, why public opinion tolerates, in Cabinet Ministers, behaviour which would subject a man to personal restraint and a regulation dietary if he ventured on it in a police-court. Parliament is the highest court of appeal in the country ; why, then, is its procedure so utterly unreliable that justice is perpetually burlesqued in it ? Is it absolutely necessary for Imperial interests that, however upright and honourable a person may be in private life, he must become a knave, without probity or feeling, from the moment that he is made a responsible member of her Majesty's Government ; and that his alleged responsibility should be one of the most obsolete of our constitutional fictions ?

A commonplace fellow, half pettifogger, half mountebank, who never said or did one notable thing in the whole course of his life, can, nevertheless, make a snug thing out of a dukedom. Duke Scampington has received about a hundred thousand pounds sterling of public money, within these last few years. He has been lodged free in a palace ; he has been lighted, warmed, and attended, all at the national expense. See, also, what other good things have been given to him by an admiring country. After holding various well-paid subordinate posts, mostly sinecures, he was appointed to Cabinet Office. Then, although nobody could possibly pretend that he had the smallest administrative experience, he was placed in supreme charge of a department which has to deal with wider and more complicated interests than any other in the world. And, as though this were not enough to recompense him for being a Duke, he was

named Lord-Lieutenant of his county, a magistrate with the power of appointing other magistrates, and a full-blown Colonel of cavalry, with pay and allowances, though it is a standing joke in his regiment that he cannot sit on horseback, and hardly knows a sword from an umbrella. Afterwards he was decorated with the broad ribbon of an Order of Knighthood instituted for conspicuous merit, and sent to rule over an important dependency, at a proper distance from criticism, and for not discharging his duties he received a princely income, exclusive of perquisites. All this, my masters, and more, because he is titular Duke of Scampington.

Now, seeing that his titular dukedom has done so much for him, it is surely reasonable to ask what he has done for his titular dukedom. He began life by adroitly persuading his father out of a life interest in the ducal estates, upon a specific promise to resettle them when certain charges had been paid off. When his father had honestly done his part to satisfy the claims, which had been accumulating during two generations, the present Duke held fast on to the land, and repudiated every claim from which it was practicable to escape. He managed the business, too, through a very hard and sharp attorney, who had influence with a powerful section of the press, and by-and-by it was wafted abroad that the father was a scoundrel and the son a Phoenix.

It was a cruel thing to see the kind-hearted, chivalrous old nobleman, who had sacrificed every vestige of property he had in the world to pay what he owed to the uttermost farthing, most forlorn, most destitute. Many members of the Carlton Club, which was his only home, will remember the proud melancholy figure of the ruined peer. His coat and hat were very shabby; he had holes in his gloves, and even sometimes in his boots. His shirt was frayed at the edges. He had been literally turned out of house and home by his son, who had given his servant orders that he was not to be admitted when he called. 'He is only to be talked to with a stick,' the old man used to say sadly, 'and my arm is now too feeble to chastise him.' One of the creditors, however, hearing these words, turned them over in his own mind, and put the advice into practice. Ultimately the honest old Duke died of shame, mortification, and want, in a single room at an hotel. He had changed characters with his son, and the world despised him. The present Scampington would not even pay his burial expenses, and set his executor at defiance.

To be sure, the thing was neatly done between the present Scampington and his attorney. He saved the ducal estates, which are now entailed on him and his successors, so that no man can touch them; and has so managed his affairs that he has become the wealthiest Duke of his line. A very rich man, and a very mean and selfish man too, who has plenty of money, but will part with none of it. Yet the debts which he covenanted to pay and left unpaid have ruined many. He has mocked the supplications of his nearest kindred, and been deaf to the voice of love and chivalry. Not one sixpence can be got out of his Grace; for is not his wealth protected by the law of entail and his person by the privilege of the Peerage? His ancestors' name, his father's reputation, he holds as cheap as his own has come to be held.

Might not a question, therefore, be fairly raised as to whether any one should be allowed to succeed to a title till he has paid the just claims on it? In equity it surely stands in pawn, and should be redeemed before it can be honestly worn. People lent this man and his father money because they were Dukes, and were known to possess a large property. Creditors believed in a Duke's honour, still more in the honour of two Dukes, when they would not have believed in that of a commoner. Dukes are among the foremost of our public men, and they are *ipso facto* members of our Government. They present, therefore, to the common understanding, guarantees of stability, which meaner persons cannot offer. It is so easy for them to impose on the ordinary run of their fellow-citizens, that it ought to be rendered impossible; and to give an ignoramus thousands upon thousands of pounds a year out of the national taxation, to lodge, warm, serve, light, and decorate him, merely because he is a Duke, yet to allow him to set the precepts of good faith at naught, and to deny all his obligations as a gentleman, is to practise customs which savour of fetish-worship rather than of the domestic policy of a great people.

IV.

POLITICAL OLD FOGEYS.

WHEN peers like the Lord Pudden mentioned in the preceding pages become old fogeys they are Earls and K.Gs., and addict



themselves to a particular branch of business, which usually consists in badgering the responsible holder of the office which they once held. Say Lord Pudden was President of the Waste-Paper Office: he considers it his duty to keep an attentive eye on all his successors in that department. He trumpets their inefficiency through an empty House of Lords, between four o'clock and five, during the dog-days; he calls on them for papers; he belabours them with ponderous

advice; he accuses them of being indifferent to the interests of their country; it is to be feared that he often makes them curse and swear in private. His lordship's dulness has not worn away with years; it has solidified into a twenty-peer power of boring. Lord Pudden, with a sheaf of papers in one hand and a double eye-glass in the other, will quote extracts from Blue-books and sententiously emit aphorisms for an hour by the clock. Nobody dare stop him; and possibly none could if they dared attempt it.

The truth is, Lord Pudden never resigns his hopes of holding office again. He believes that any Ministerial crisis might lead to his being recalled to his old post, or offered the Privy Seal. He would accept even a lesser office which brought him pay and the faculty of jobbing; for though he has become mighty rich by place-holding, and can reap no new honours by mismanaging the public business, the instincts of meddling and muddling are so strong in him that they amount to a monomania. Take from Lord Pudden the hope of again crossing his legs under the mahogany of Downing-street, and he would pine away like a parasite torn from the parent oak.

It was different with Johnny Bustle, who, knowing that his own days of seal-jingling had gone, never to return, was content to lift up his croaking voice at times to carp at what his successors were doing. But the crow of the old chancery at last grew so weak that it barely reached the reporters' gallery; and he preferred making what noise he could with pen and ink rather than on the floor of the House of Lords. He wrote letters to *The Times*, and whining pamphlets, headed subscriptions in favour of rebels, patronised Radical parliamentary candidates, and took the chair at public meetings convoked for sensational purposes. His prestige as an ex-premier was still great enough to give his words some little weight abroad; and he abused this circumstance to harry and thwart his opponents by all the means which senile ingenuity could suggest.

Patriotism and Liberalism were only knucklebones with which the old politician juggled, for England's honour was never so meanly handled as when Earl Bustle had the keeping of it; while his Liberalism was little else than a stale device by which he caught up the ideas of honest men and made them serve his own advantage, until the people grew tired of such insincere tricks, and would have no more of his leadership. To set up a yell in favour of

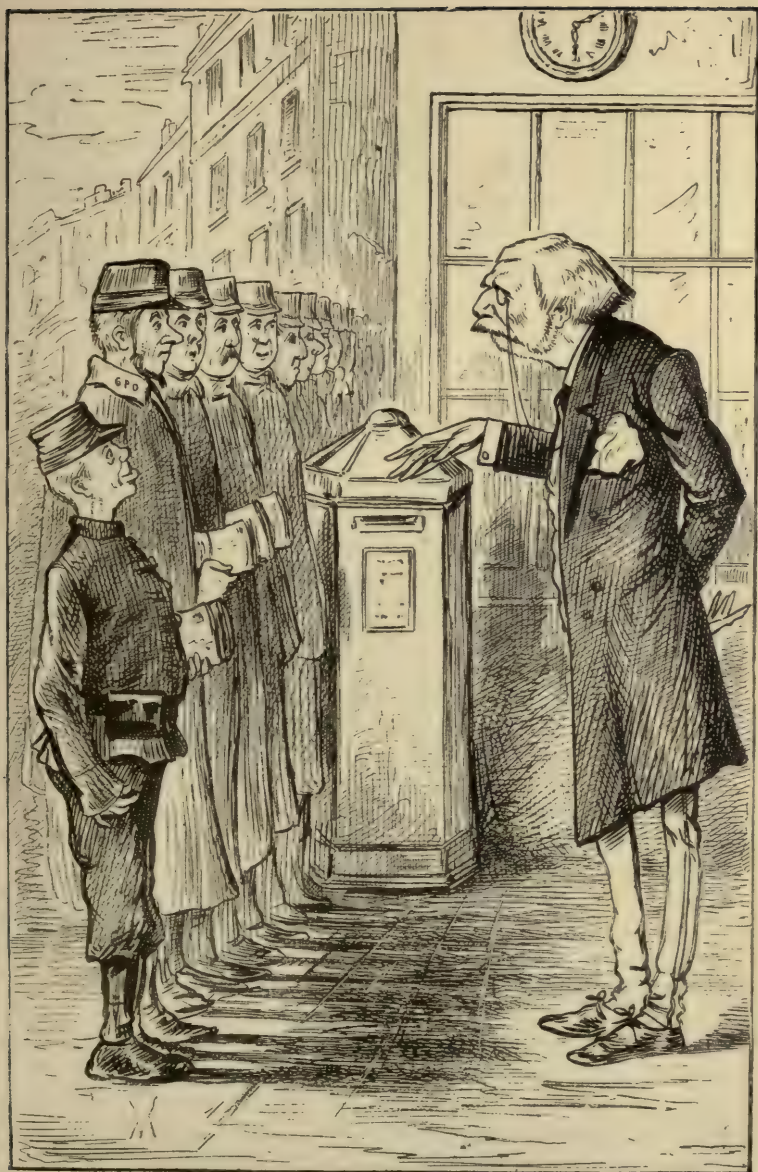
Bulgarians or Poles, to be hot in the cause of French Republicans or American negroes, is a cheap way of asserting philanthropy ; but had Earl Bustle's heart ever beaten with one real honest thump for the cause of human welfare, he might have found numerous opportunities of bettering the condition of English paupers and Irish peasants, whilst he had an enthusiastic parliamentary majority on his side and a credulous nation behind him.

In his declining years the temper of Johnny Bustle grew bilious from seeing that since he had dropped out of political life Britain was all the better for the change. When, however, any national disaster befell, he was eager in proclaiming that it had always been predicted by him, and that had his advice only been followed we should have been spared the catastrophe.

Less successful at the outset of his career than Johnny Bustle, his foe, Johnny Banners, has been spared so great a fall. He dropped on to a bed of Post-Office papers. Doubtless it is an anticlimax for one who started with the notion of wearing the mantle of the two Pitts, never to have found himself higher perched than at the top of the postal department ; but Johnny Banners, when calmly reflecting on the subject, ought to see that even this rise was far in excess of his merits. If he were not brother to a Duke, and heir of the Dukedom, he would not have had a seat in the Beaconsfield Cabinet. He is one of those troublesome adherents of whom a Premier says when he forms his Cabinet, 'Where the deuce shall I stow that man ?' and considering that he is equally unfit for all places of trust, it is concluded that he is good enough for any ; and so in he goes, with all his squareness, into the first round hole vacant.

Johnny Banners retained enough of his old cock-a-whoop spirit to indulge in the strangest jinks of mightiness at the expense of his subordinates. He loved to play the despot, to sign sudden and startling decrees, which played old gooseberry with the letter-bags, and turned all the postmen sulky. He looked upon these postmen as an army of his own raising ; he seemed to think they needed discipline, and rated them soundly several times a year ; if they respectfully memorialised him for an increase of pay or pension, he fumed outright, talked of mutiny, and forthwith made a wholesome example by dismissing some picked members of his host.

What a terrible Emperor of all the Russias autocratic Johnny Banners would have made, and what a dashing Premier of England he would have been in time of difficult relations with foreign



JOHNNY BANNERS RATING THE POSTMEN.

Powers! While he sat at the Cabinet board, handling his paper-knife with an aggressive air, his talk was continually of sending fleets and despatching ultimatums. He was readily appeased, however, by the word 'impossible,' when it came from the lips of his chief, and would thereupon sit back, half closing his eyes, dreaming, maybe, that the spirit of statesmanship had died out of all British bosoms save his own. Johnny Banners soothes his leisure, when in Opposition, by writing Alexandrine verses thirteen feet long, which he reads to himself and appreciates highly.

V.

LORDS SPIRITUAL.

IF a man desires a bishopric, we learn on respected authority that he desires a good thing. In England he desires a good income into the bargain, for there are no prelates so magnificently paid as those of the Established Church. A French Bishop flourishes contentedly on 500*l.* a year, an Italian on 300*l.* This would seem queer wages to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who draws 15,000*l.* per annum, or to the Bishop of London, who pockets 10,000*l.* Most of the other Bishops have salaries varying between 4,000*l.* and 7,000*l.*

It is only fair that a man who reaches the top of his profession, whatever it be, should be munificently rewarded. An Archbishop has as good a claim to live well, and to get the means of educating his children creditably, as a banker or a merchant; so it is not in any spirit of censorious criticism that the wealth of the spiritual peers is mentioned. Still, 7,000*l.* to 15,000*l.* a year is hardly necessary for the purpose in question, or middle-class Englishmen would rarely receive good educations.

Undoubtedly our upper clergy are generally personally respectable, and the Episcopacy of England is the most learned in the world. Appointments to bishoprics are closely watched, and have always been keenly criticised. Premiers might not always lay hands on the best men—they naturally jobbed bishoprics like other things—but they could not help appointing finished scholars, even when they went out of their way, as the younger Pitt did (greatly to the disgust of George III.), to prefer their own tutors to more eligible candidates. Take any three Bishops at random, and they might be

pitted to hold their own at Latin, Greek, and theology against any three foreign Bishops picked from the whole of Christendom. As for the Cardinals (if we except Manning, who is an Oxford man), what three of them would care to measure their wits in Latin verses against Thompson, Wordsworth, and Temple?

As a fine average specimen of the English Bishop, let us name the Right Rev. Dr. Bulleigh, who lords it over the see of Grandchurch.

Dr. Bulleigh is one of those men who owe everything to hard work, and who get the most splendid educations without, from first to last, costing their relatives more than 500*l.*—that is to say, about the sum which many a father is compelled to spend annually on the youth who elects the Army or the Bar for his profession. At eighteen Thomas Bulleigh was well-nigh independent: at twenty-one, entirely so.

The son of a country clergyman, he was well tutored by his father, and obtained a Queen's scholarship at Westminster. Thence he went to Christ Church, Oxford, as a junior student, with rooms free and 120*l.* a year. Having in due course taken a first-class degree, he became a senior student and stepped at once into an income which, thanks to the number of his pupils, amounted to nearly 1,500*l.* No life is pleasanter than that of a don. He has a cosy set of rooms rent free; a comfortable hall, where he gets an excellent dinner, in capital company, cheap; libraries, means of recreation, and intellectual society abound in his University. And his prospects need never cause him a moment's uneasiness, for if he be not in too great a hurry to get married, he will be sure to obtain a good college living by simply waiting for it.

Or, if domestic life entice him, he may transfer his services to a public school, as the Rev. T. Bulleigh did, towards the age of thirty. The head-mastership of a flourishing college being vacant, he sent in his testimonials; the fathers of two of his Oxford pupils were members of the governing body; they gave him their votes, and induced the rest of the board to do so. Although he was somewhat young for so responsible a post, Mr. Bulleigh's attainments were known to be in advance of his years; so behold him installed in a spacious schoolhouse with a big garden and an income of 3,000*l.* As the custom is, he soon after took unto himself a pretty wife, the sister of one of his University chums.

A clergyman who gets so far in his career is bound to go farther. After wielding the birch with marked success for fifteen years over



DINING IN HALL.

the backs of little and big boys, Dr. Bulleigh became renowned as one of the ablest of masters and most forcible of preachers. Two volumes of sermons delivered in the school chapel before his boy congregation were considered as models of what such addresses should be; and it was a good testimony to the Doctor's character that the elder boys of the school, though they tingled at the recollection of certain private interviews with their head master, spoke of him with respect, and looked up to him with a kind of love. An archdeaconry being offered to the Doctor was declined with quasi-haughtiness; a canonry of Westminster, and by-and-by a deanery, were also tendered in vain. 'Bishop or nothing,' said Dr. Bulleigh; and accordingly a Bishop he became.

He cuts a prelatial figure on the episcopal bench, and is always hearkened to with deference by their lordships. A Conservative and a stedfast Protestant, Dr. Bulleigh is not so bigoted a Churchman as to decline controversies with Dissenters on mystical points



A PRIVATE INTERVIEW WITH DR. BULLEIGH.

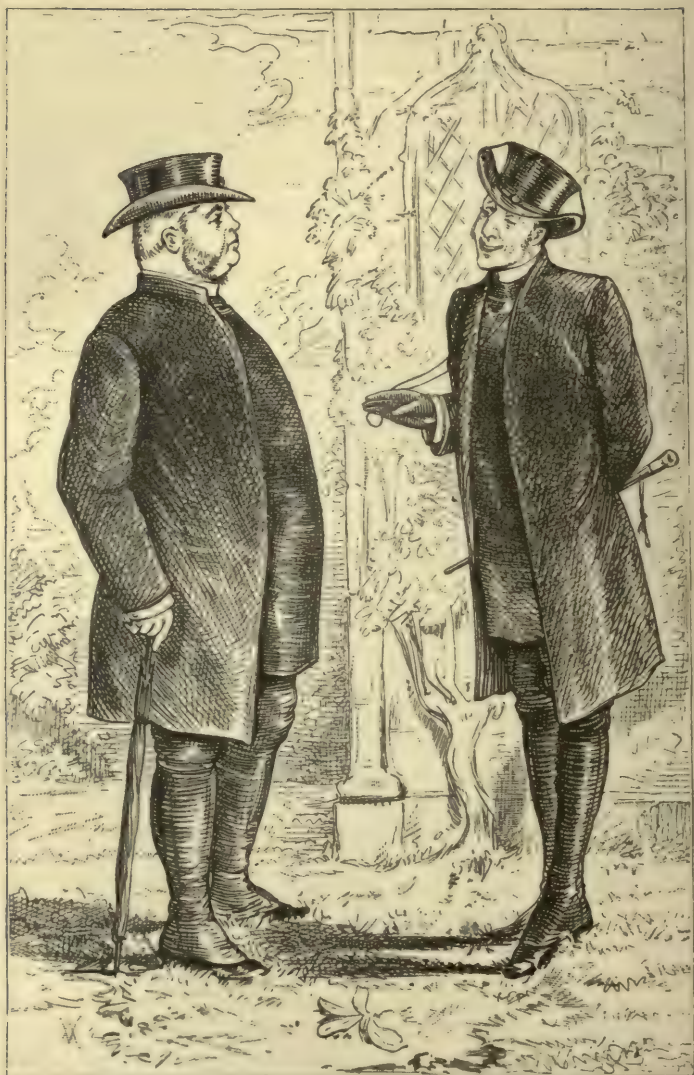
of the Thirty-nine Articles, but whomsoever he discusses with he pulverizes. He has a grand way of carrying his shovel-hat aloft, and his apron covers an impressive rotundity of waist well suited to his dignity. These portly Bishops always show off better than the lean ones. Arrogant he may be, preemptory in argument he

certainly is; but it does one good to see this rural parson's son risen by meritorious labour to the aristocratical senate, and holding his own without compromise against the unorthodox proddings of time-serving statesmen.

A Bishop like Dr. Bulleigh is not a toady—why should he be? He can expect nothing more than he has got; he has quantities of livings to give away; he resides in a palace; he is lord supreme over his see—it is his vineyard, and who is there to make him afraid? You should see him deal with candidates for deacon's and priest's orders to understand how little of the tame spirit there is in the man. His fifteen years of head-mastership have imbued him with the pedagogic starch which nothing can crumple out, and he browbeats his sucking parsons as if they were fifth-form boys given to shuffling through their Homer. Some of them cower under his rasping tones as he upbraids them for ill-digested divinity; but all are agreed that to be ordained in the see of Grandchurch is as good as taking a second degree in honours, for Dr. Bulleigh unmercifully 'ploughs' the halt and the lame. He says, truly enough, that the days of illiterate parsons are gone by.

Many others of his fellow-Bishops are like him; and yet there will occasionally ascend to the episcopal throne a prelate who is rather a man of the world than a divine, and who, in exteriors, plays his part much less majestically than the schoolmaster Bishops. Douce in manners, shy of committing themselves to any plain statements, abhorring controversy, or even mild discussion upon such topics of ecclesiastical discipline as Bishops must needs deal with, these right rev. lords, mostly related to the great governing families, pass through their episcopal career with no more noise than oil poured into a lamp.

Dr. Trimmiers, Bishop of Worldlingham, is a prelate of this sort. His brother was a Whig peer, and for many years a Cabinet Minister: not a particularly clever man or a good one, and Dr. Trimmiers is like him. He has all the Whig taste for jobbery. He was no sooner enthroned than he began to bestow the fattest benefices in his gift on his sons-in-law, nephews, and cousins' children. The ordinations at Worldlingham became a byword for the admission into the Church of well-connected dunces, who had barely scraped through a pass degree, and had no clerical vocation beyond that which is contained in a restless desire to elbow pious men out of Church emoluments. No classman ever showed his face



THE RIGHT REV. DOCTORS BULLEIGH AND TRIMMIERS.

at Worlthingham, and Dissent spread through the ill-governed diocese like an epidemic. The public press at last called attention

to the scandal; but Dr. Trimmiers cared not two pins what any newspaper might say. There were party journals enough to take up the cudgels for him; and if the public sided with his critics, what on earth could that signify to him? For a cynical disregard of all decencies, for an utter patrician contempt of public opinion, commend us to a Whig placeman.

Dr. Trimmiers is a scholar and an amiable sayer of society nothings; he plies a capital knife and fork; and he has just wit enough to dismiss, with a dry impertinent joke, people who have favours to beg of him or grievances to lay before his notice. He resides mostly in London, and leaves the business of his see to be transacted by his chaplain, a nephew, who is a yet more thorough-going jobber and poco-curantist than himself. Some half-a-dozen times a year, at ordinations and confirmations, his lordship of Worldlingham lifts up his voice in the cathedral, treating his hearers to a cold soulless sermon, full of classical polish and comfortless philosophy. It would be an abuse of terms to call such a Bishop a Christian. He worships Mammon with a whole-hearted devotion, which no fear of God or man ever alloyed. Many Bishops of his stamp would long ago have caused the Church to be disestablished; and the time will come, it may be hoped, when the appointment of such godless snobs—for they are nothing else—will be resented as an outrage upon religion, and no longer be tolerated. One of the most satisfactory results accruing from the downfall of the Whig ascendancy is that the jobbery of bishoprics for the sake of overgrown family interest has ceased to have its *raison d'être*. The last arch-jobbing Premier was Lord Palmerston; and he, good easy man, would often have made better selections than he did had it not been for his religious kinsman, crony, and spiritual monitor, the Earl of Churchbury, a short sketch of whom is here appended.

VI.

THE SABBATARIAN PEER.

It is now many years since a high-nosed slouching youth, with a deal of shyness, which passed for conceit, might have been seen shambling about the pleasant lanes of Dorcasshire. He walked with the long stealthy stride of a Presbyterian Scripture-reader,

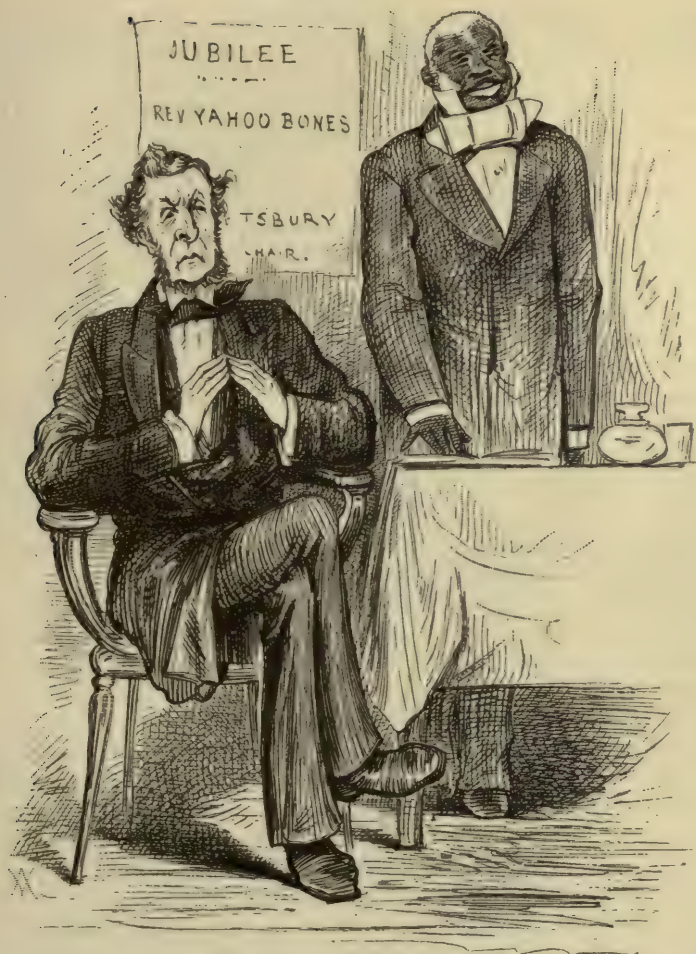
who might be supposed by a careless observer to have at least one eye on the temporal things of the earth. He belonged to a family who were pretty well off, as times went in the early part of the present century. They had some land, which was not unproductive, though there was little of it; and the large-acred squires, who counted their farms by the dozen and their cattle by the herd, did not secretly think so much of them as they thought of themselves. Still they got a remunerative quantity of second-rate butter ready for market-days, and had a steady bailiff, who sold it at fair prices for ready-money. Their tenants, too, could afford to pay high rents, because the wars of Napoleon had raised wheat to a price never contemplated by Providence; and the agricultural interest, in the persons of Dorcasshire yeomen and their womankind, was therefore agog with delight, breaking out all over in flowery waistcoats and gay-coloured gowns on festive occasions.

The youth above mentioned had, moreover, a strong pull over other people, because his ancestors had been called Earls of Churchbury for several generations. Nevertheless the young Lord was not half liked by his neighbours and contemporaries. He was never seen going at a hand-gallop across country on a well-bred hack, to meet the gentlemen of the county at cover-side. He could not talk on sporting topics for six hours at a stretch, and tell the same rough jokes all the year round, as the other Dorcasshire Lords devoutly believed that a nobleman, who respected himself, was bound to do. He was also a no-bottle man, having a weak head and a rickety constitution; so that he had been seen by astonished boon companions to shed tears on rent-days and harvest-home suppers, when flagons of ale and punch-bowls went freely round in brisk pursuance of old English customs. He was likewise much more fond of female sympathy than agreed with the rude manners of the time, and it was contemptuously remarked that he might always be found at the end of some woman's apron-string.

All this caused Lord Churchbury to be somewhat roughly brushed aside when he tried to domineer over his fellow-nobles, on the strength of a University degree which he had obtained. As he could not ride or shoot, or take his glass, as a man ought, said the squirearchy, they changed the conversation with rustic arts not too refined when his lordship's name was mentioned, and put queer smiles on their noses, rather than on their lips, after the rural fashion of being funny, when he appeared among them. He was

THE GENTLEMEN OF THE COUNTY AT COVER-SIDE.





left out of their social gatherings and succulent dinner-parties, till the taste of convivial cakes and ale was almost forgotten in his mouth.

This, however, did not prevent Lord Churchbury from making a rapid way in the world. The turn of his mind drew him towards religious subjects. He was a Low Churchman, half a Dissenter in doctrine, and indulged in hazy dreams for bringing back Wesleyans, Baptists, and others into the fold of Conformity. Pious Methodists,

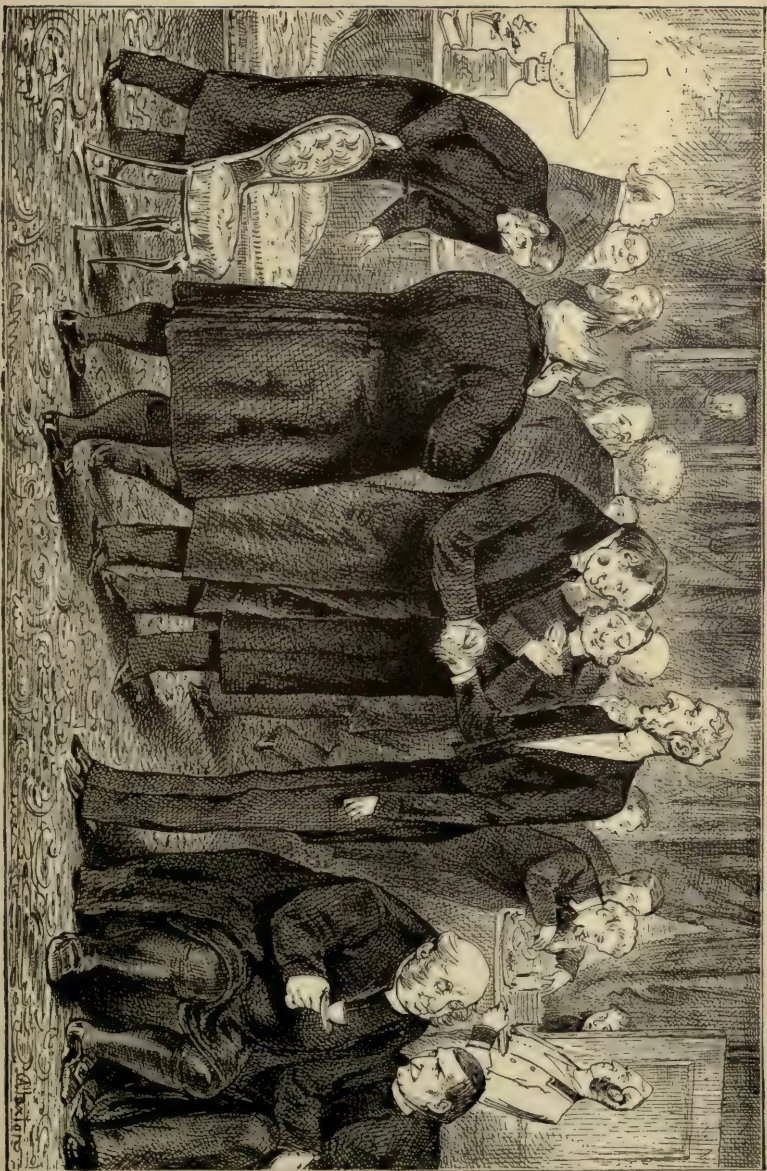
Quakers, and square-toed Jumpers became his intimates; the advocacy of their grievances was put into his hands; and when it was seen how solemnly he spoke and how often his name figured in the reports of Exeter Hall meetings, he was generally voted to be an authority on Church matters. His relatives, being Whig placemen, were delighted to see him in such saintly odour with religious sects, whose votes were well worth having at election-time; and somebody observed that if Lord Churchbury had not existed it would have been necessary to invent him for party purposes. It is certain that he withdrew the support of the Low Church clergy altogether from the Tory party, and kept his kinsfolk a long time comfortable in their berths in consequence.

Notable service like this called for recompense, and matters soon came to such a pass that the Premier durst confer no bishopric, deanery, or Crown living without consulting Lord Churchbury. Nor did his lordship vouchsafe his advice on clerical appointments in anything like a rash spirit. As was to be expected, he first saw that his relatives and friends were well attended to, and then cast his eyes about among all the quiet, sober, and discreet doctors of divinity, who were not likely to break away from his control, once the lawn was put on them.

It was a sorry passport to Lord Churchbury's favour to be a man of towering intellect, with a commanding voice in the pulpit and a ready pen. When his party were out of office occasionally, it used to make him frantic to see such men appointed by the Tories. He would have liked the Queen to keep all the sees vacant until the Whigs and he were in power again to advise her; it is even said that he used some roundabout influence to advise her Majesty to exert her prerogative in this manner on a certain occasion when a Tory Cabinet was known to be at the last gasp.

As the Low Church press was ever at his beck, Lord Churchbury was enabled to stir up loud clamours against every High Church appointment; and he would goad on his own Bishops to quarrel with the others in Convocation, till the debates of the spiritual parliament recalled the wonders of an Irish faction-fight. The better to keep up his authority over clergymen of every degree, my lord extended hospitality to them under the form of casual dinners and frequent teas. On Wednesday and Saturday evenings Churchbury House used to be black with them.

Nobody has a right to cavil at the influence which a man may



A SOIRÉE AT CHURCHBURY HOUSE.

exercise by legitimate methods over his fellows. Leaders of men there must be, and it is not every leader who is so earnest in his vocation as Lord Churchbury was and is. It is impossible to forget, however, that it is to this strait-laced Earl and his sable clique that England is indebted for the maintenance of that rigid Sabbatarianism which has done so much to encourage Sunday drunkenness and promote crime. The opening of museums, libraries, and the Crystal Palace on Sundays; the harmless recreation of music in the parks; everything, in short, which could tend to the exhilaration of a day which was appointed for the rest and relaxation of man, has been vigorously opposed by Lord Churchbury in the name of morals.

His lordship is a good man—a devout worshipper, and a firm believer in the beneficial results to be derived from attending three services in one day, besides singing hymns at home between whiles. Unfortunately, his character is not such as to fit him for the enjoyment of exuberant mirth on weekdays; so that he is not in a position to sympathize with the popular craving for amusement on the only day out of the seven when poor people can get it. He has not succeeded in filling the conventicle; but he helps to drive the Sabbath-oppressed working man to the public-house.

It would be unfair to close a sketch of Lord Churchbury without remarking that he is charitable with his money, and has done good in many narrow-minded, but not less meritorious, ways. He would deserve a kind word if it were only for his labours in the cause of education. He is not like the religious nobles of some foreign countries, who think that popular faith must be based on ignorance.

VII.

THE PHILANTHROPIST PEER.

FROM Lord Churchbury to Lord Pynshed the transition is not wide --the one a Sabbatarian, the other a philanthropist.

A long, thin, girlish creature, with a shrill voice and a bushy beard, are the outward visible signs of this rather droll Marquis. He used to go about looking into the grievances of servant-maids, rabbits, and old hens, collaring beggars in the street and hauling them off before the magistrate, that they might be committed to prison, and have the benefit of a bath and shorn locks. He rescues



small street-boys from evil associations by having them sent to industrial schools. He presents old girls in the workhouse with flannel petticoats and parcels of snuff.

His heart is larger than his head ; for, while prowling about the highways in search of those whom the lion of vice might devour, he forgot to look through his own house, and ascertain whether the aforesaid lion had not got in there through some back-door. He

was disgusted to find one day that the lion had not only walked in, but had walked out again, taking away the whitest turtle-dove from his family dovecot.

He bore this domestic mishap more philosophically than he might have endured the loss of his umbrella, had a supperless beggar helped himself to it. His mind is so enwrapped in the fog of poor-law problems that he neglects to eat his soup with care, and spills much of it into his beard. He lives in a chronic amazement at the number of beggars there are on earth, though he is chary neither of his pence in relieving them nor of his time in hunting



them down. Sometimes it strikes him, with all the force of a new idea, that there must be people who impose upon him; and the first begging-letter writer who importunes him when he is in this mood is made a public example. One of this tribe, against whom he had obtained a sentence of six months on the treadmill, explained with pathetic astonishment that he had never expected to be treated in this fashion after receiving so many tokens of his lordship's kindness. 'But this is the first time I have ever heard of you,' observed Lord Pynshed. The rogue shook his pate and smiled: he said he had thrice written to his lordship under different names, and had received a five-pound note on each occasion.

It is easier to laugh at a philanthropist than to emulate the amiable foibles which make him a subject for laughter. To begin with, an amateur who should aspire to keep in stride with the Marquis would need a power of money; for his lordship could (at one time) give away 100*l.* a week without withdrawing a single *entrée* from his well-served table. This does not detract from the virtue of his gifts, for there is many a peer richer than he who would see a beggar at Jericho before he went out of his way to inquire why his trousers were in such forlorn condition. Several of Lord Pynshed's brother peers who go in for philanthropy have taken their lessons from the gentleman who addressed Canning's 'Needy Knife-grinder.'

It is the misfortune, rather than the fault, of Lord Pynshed that he has earned more ridicule than gratitude by his labours in the cause of the poor. Perhaps he has exposed with too stolid a good faith sores which polite society would rather have kept concealed. Perhaps he has spoken some ugly truths in high places. Perhaps he has given some beggars to understand that he did not consider they were wholly to blame for the dilapidation of their garments; and these beggars may have noised the thing saucily into the ears of other Noble Lords.

Marquis Pynshed is at once too truthful and too timid for the part he would play. Too truthful, because a Marquis is not expected to rake up the mud of abuses like a demagogue; and if he insists upon doing so, he must expect to be told that his hands are not clean; too timid, because he has never cared to identify himself uncompromisingly with the popular movements for relieving the lower classes. He has wished to be a philanthropist and a Marquis at one and the same time. He has aspired to act independently, and has converted himself into an Ishmael, against whom those he has benefited poke fun, and at whom his fellow-lords contemptuously sneer.

They sneer so unanimously that even Bob, Lord Chousington, curls his lip at him. Now who is Bob Chousington, that he should presume to be thus merry at a man who wears his heart upon his sleeve? Bob Chousington belongs to another variety of the peerage. He is a coaching Lord; one who tools a four-in-hand about, and contrives to make it pay, like everything else he turns his hand to. It is of this ornament to his order that we have next to speak.

VIII.

THE COACHING PEER.

THERE are not two opinions in England about coaching, or any other honest form of horsiness. Our nobility, clergy, and commonalty love the road, the field, and the turf with an inborn affection which seems a peculiarity to our race and nation. We admire the bold jockey and steeplechase-rider who starves himself till he is a light weight of renown, fit to take part in our Olympian games; and the jockey winner of a Derby steps straightway into a finer fortune and better prospects than often come to any toiler of the brain after the labour of a lifetime. There is reason enough too in our predilection for horses and horsemen. A man who rides straight to hounds, and goes across country without craning, may generally be relied upon to act fairly in all his dealings; for he must have plenty of nerve, discretion, pluck, and good temper. A thoroughbred, who knows how to gallop, will not stand rough handling; and when the gallant brute has once got into his stride in company, all that the best rider can do is to keep his hands down and sit fast, happen what may.

Also a noble coachman, who can match a team of four horses so that they agree to a hair in height and colour, that they are even in temper and courage, and that they all step together like music, is a personage seldom wanting in good taste and sound judgment. He must choose bone and breeding, steadiness and high mettle, for his wheelers; grace, action, bright looks, and kind manners, for his leaders, or he will either stick fast in heavy ground, or have his splinter-bars kicked to pieces the first time he gets into a difficulty while springing his cattle down-hill with an express train whistling on each side of him.

But there are exceptions to every rule, and what is to be said of a man who, born to the duties of a legislator, a magistrate, and an officer, sets up a four-horse coach for business purposes, and sells his screws to his partners in a speculation on the fondness of silly people for a coronet?



Bob Chousington cannot plead poverty as an excuse for turning coachman. He inherited a rent-roll of over 40,000*l.* a year, and has spent his money carefully enough. In youth he was a specimen of that not very lovely type of humanity, the thrifty rake. An ineradicable love of petty gains, and an attraction towards the company of the proletariat, for which genealogists may account as they will, seem to have impelled Bob to augment his swollen income by driving a coach for hire, and thus gratify the two master-passions of his mind. He has earned many a five-shilling piece, and shrewdly invested the same. Moreover, he is a distinguished character to the ostler at the Spotted Dog, to the one-eyed boots at the Rat and Badger, and to the flirtatious barmaids of the Free-and-Easy. He is a sworn member of the Brotherhood of Jockeys, and could give a wrinkle to a Yorkshireman. The only persons who look askance at Bob are certain menials, possessed by an uncomfortable idea that my lord occasionally diverts the gratuities of the generous from their pockets into his own. Now and then Bob is tipped half-a-crown by a breezy passenger; and, as Bob puts it, 'one is bound to pocket it, you know, just to keep up the spirit of the thing.' Spirit is a happily elastic word, expressing at once the temper of mind



"BOB IS TIPPED HALF-A-CROWN BY A BREEZY PASSENGER."

displayed by the Barons who won us the Great Charter, and by the Barons who act for us as common carriers. Equally from a noble desire to play his part thoroughly, Bob will not unfrequently stand glasses all round to his congenial acquaintance, and hobnob with them, just to show he is no prouder than he should be. Bob is a Liberal, and the bank in which he is a partner has been enabled to render some shrewd services to his party at election-time.

But the passion of Bob is for money-making. He cannot help it; it runs in his blood, and is perhaps associated with a taint of hereditary insanity. Bob's father was a maniac, who believed that an honourable part of his person was made of glass, so that he was afraid to sit thereon, and used to discharge the legislative and judicial functions of a peer and lord-lieutenant standing. Such crazes, transmitted to a son, may assume divers forms, and it is possibly Bob's destiny to end his days as a miser, believing himself destitute, and clutching at the pound a week which his friends will allow him to humour his whim.

A favourite trick of Bob's is to lend money to exalted personages, charging only what he calls the legal rate of interest—twelve per cent. or so—and stipulating royal favours in return for his generosity. Sometimes he gets a coloneley for a brother; sometimes he is allowed to accompany a prince in his travels; once he was permitted to parade himself in the House of Lords in a yeomanry uniform, and to move the Address in reply to the Queen's Speech. Those who confer these favours imagine that they make Bob pay dearly for them; but Bob always has the pull over them in the long-run. Through the managers of the banking firm in which he has a share he knows the credit of every man in town, and never lends to a gentleman who is in serious pecuniary straits. By safe speculations in this line Bob has increased his domains pretty considerably, and estreated not a few pawned heirlooms into the bargain. In an upper room of his country mansion he keeps quite a museum of family treasures—that is, treasures that once belonged to other families; and he sells some from time to time to wealthy parvenus, lord-worshipping Yankees, and others who are disposed to pay for them ten times what they are worth, on the strength of Bob's clever puffery.

'Look at this opal,' says Bob, having rubbed the jewel on his sieve. 'There is a prejudice in our family against opals, so I don't mean to keep this one, though Marie Antoinette wore it on

the scaffold. It is worth a thousand guineas as you see it. It's the biggest of its kind. But I'd sell it for 500*l.* on behalf of our county hospital.'

Bob pays some of his tradesmen in opals 'worn by queens,' or in diamonds that have 'glistened on the hilts of kings' swords;' but most of his purveyors get no money from him at all. He introduces customers; and by a tacit agreement the tradesmen never send in his bills. On the other hand, if one of Bob's *protégés* neglects the Christmas settlement with his tailor, Bob is down on the culprit at once, threatening him with social ostracism and other atrocious things. He can curse and swear like a tithe-proctor when he has anything to gain by overawing an indebted youngster.

Bob's morals are the reverse of pure; but he takes care to make his relations with the other sex thoroughly remunerative. Once, but once only, was he nearly being 'let in' to the tune of a diamond bracelet, which had been pawned to him, as per custom, through a money-lending crony. Having offered this trinket to a Miss de Brompton as a token of his esteem, he found this lady on the very next day taking afternoon tea with a noble Duke. Full of wrath, Bob bundled his Grace out of the house, which he could safely do, for the Duke was old enough and mean enough to be his father. Then Bob returned and chastised Miss de Brompton with his umbrella, bidding her remember that when he gave diamond bracelets he would brook no infidelities.

Soon afterwards Miss de Brompton advertised herself to the world as proprietress of a theatre, where 'leg-pieces' were to be performed. This moral establishment had been rented and furnished with Bob's money; but by the time he had recouped himself three times over for his investment, he was alike tired of the playhouse and Miss de Brompton, and got rid of both in an ingenious manner, the less said about which the better.

However, though Bob Chousington is, to put things mildly, nothing better than a low grubber of money, of the extent of his authority there can be no manner of doubt. In the first place, his person and character are held by our social code to be inviolable. He has shown the white feather, and remains an officer in the army. He has been convicted by a jury of his countrymen of an offence which would have put to shame any man of honour, yet he continues to act as a magistrate. Newspapers decline to publish unfavourable comments on his actions; so that the statute or *Scan-*



MISS DE BROMPTON.

datum Magnatum has only fallen into desuetude for an excellent reason. Our ancestors held it to be a terrible thing to libel a peer, and inflicted severer punishment on the offender than if he had spoken ill of a private individual. We are wiser in our generation, and do not give any one the chance of committing so awful a crime.

Still, one might put up with Bob were his privileges of a merely

passive kind: unfortunately, the Constitution encourages him to be aggressive. Acting at the instigation of a defendant's attorney, he waylaid and assaulted the plaintiff in a Chancery suit against one of his business connections, who had notoriously conducted a traffic stigmatised by the House of Commons as 'infamous.' To enable him to perpetrate this outrage with impunity, Bob prudently retained the services of an escort of prize-fighters, and wrought the deed of cowardice by night. The thing was easily enough managed under these conditions; and a roguish attorney having been selected to act as false accuser before a sycophant magistrate, the trick was played. Played sharply too; for Bob's magistrate was an Irishman, who, with a natural confusion of ideas, desired to exalt the peerage of his native country in the person of Bob, who is an Englishman.

My Lord's breach of the law and contempt of court were committed a few days before the trial should have come off. But Bob had no difficulty in getting it postponed. He went further, and exercised the judicial power of transporting the plaintiff for life. A feudal tyrant of the Middle Ages could scarcely have suppressed a Jew creditor with greater expedition.

How, it may be asked, could Bob transport any one for life? No judge of the High Court at Westminster drives a coach. One must reply with the legal maxim, *Qui facit per alium facit per se*. The facts are recorded in the annals of our time, to be read by all, to be understood by anybody who takes the trouble to reflect. Let such a one remember that this is essentially an age of sly crimes. Public opinion is at heart sound enough to prevent acts of glaring oppression, should it become cognisant of them. But men who are promoted to honour and power, for no merit of their own, may often be covetous, unjust, and cruel. These will accordingly use their influence—the influence of wealth and rank—to prevent public opinion from being correctly informed of the facts of any culpable transaction in which they may happen to have been mixed up.

If Englishmen saw Lord Midas stabbing Colonel Bayard in the back, they would do something more than cry shame; and Midas knows this well enough. So he works in the dark, and gets lacqueys and tailors' touts and courtesans to perform his sinister behests. Worse than this, he has devised the supreme art of corrupting the press without making it lose its sense of self-respect. The editor of the smallest provincial paper, to whom you offered a

bribe in the most delicately worded way, would probably request you to choose between leaving his room by the door or the window. But he is easily to be got at, by those who know the trick; as are editors of journals supposed to make and unmake Cabinets, but which, in reality, Ministers make and unmake. Midas is a member of a close corporation called 'Society,' into which it is the highest ambition of every Briton to be admitted; and editors are only accorded this favour on the understanding that they shall think, speak, and write in the tone of the privileged caste. Even the judges dare not come in conflict with Society. The Queen herself cannot protect a man whom Society wishes to destroy. So Bayard discovered when the judges refused him justice, and the newspapers published a garbled report of his case; and in his despair he appealed to the Sovereign he had served so loyally through a lifetime and appealed in vain.

IX.

SPORTING PEERS.

A FALSE step on the staircase of an eating-house in Paris suddenly made a Duke of a red-headed hobbledohoy, and put him in possession of a Scotch fortune. He was a stout podgy boy, abounding in health and strength, whose clothes always looked too tight for him, and he really did not know what to do with himself. His very hair curled quite crisp with surprise at his own greatness. 'By Jingo,' he seemed to be saying to himself privately, 'here's a go! I'm blessed if I am not two of the first Dukes going, a Prince, three Magistrates, and two Colonels, all here under my own hat.' And this was all very well in its way, but that robust obstreperous boy wanted to amuse himself. He had an hereditary dislike to politics, not one of his forbears having distinguished themselves in public life for several generations. As long as he could be held in by a most respectable and careful mother, he confined himself to gay clothing such as invariably delights young gentlemen of his complexion. He thought nothing of a white hat and a yellow greatcoat, with a red spotted neckerchief, relieved by turquoise studs. His very boots were particoloured, and his trousers were of the boldest patterns known among tailors. A loud garrulous boy too he was, always



treading on other people's toes and thinking it a good joke. There was not room for him on the pavement of a street, or in the gateway of an inn. He puffed and blew and threw his arms about, and

pelted chambermaids with the shells of the nuts he cracked when still an innocent child, or fondly imagined so to be.

His ingenuous youth, however, was soon over, for he was sent, as a duty British parents owe their offspring when high born, to Oxford; and there he shone out. Drags, tandems, hounds, and all that the University authorities pretend not to allow, were winked at in his case. His Grace spent most of his time at Limmer's while supposed to be in search of academic honours; and his college was proud of him. Just after he came of age there was a row; he was sold up by the late Mr. Badwig, and pleaded minority. This would not do, however. Badwig had him too tight, and they became fast friends. Badwig and the Duke changed places for several years. The money-lender was lord of the Duke's castle and lands, put them to a rack-rent, and managed things for him generally, while his Grace was on the turf. Badwig lent the Duke money too, like a wily, clever, calculating Badwig as he was. Badwig did the Duke's odd jobs, and some of them were very odd jobs.

His Grace of Gambleton, who wore his heart upon his sleeve, had a habit of making miscellaneous acquaintances in his dashing off-hand way. He even condescended to negotiate a ducal loan with them, and drove them about in his business-like trap with the two fast-trotting cobs, showing an absence of pride and a geniality of manner truly refreshing. They were, therefore, amazed when he unaccountably went from their gaze, and Badwig was sent to deal with them on strict dot-and-carry-one principles. A Swiss gentleman, who thought he was going to make a fortune out of the Duke's inexperience, was cruelly disappointed when he found that Badwig rather proposed that the Duke should have a considerable sum of money out of him, and talked very vaguely about repayment. The manner in which the Swiss gentleman dwelt upon his astonishment when this fact was explained to him showed a command of vigorous language quite unusual.

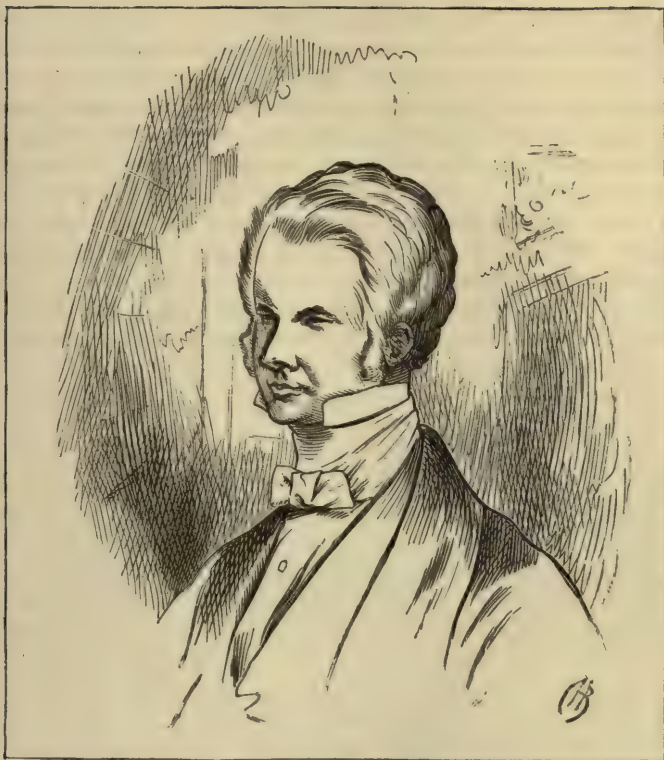
Things went on swimmingly, however, with the Duke of Gambleton. Trumps were always turning up for his Grace in some way. Railway companies wanted to run new lines through his estates, geologists found out mines in unsuspected places, speculative builders were eager to deal with him for picturesque sites. Besides, he often betted successfully; sometimes too he won races as well, and as he spent all the money he received, he got along famously in the world, leaving Badwig to deal with his liabilities. In short,

he led a life of endless jollity, and really enjoyed it. It was 'Blow me tight, Badwig, you *are* a trump!' and 'Well, your Grace, I do my utmost,' all the year round, and Badwig thought his little game was not a bad one. Perhaps the Duke was of the same opinion; perhaps not. Noble Lords not unfrequently keep their own counsel in such cases.

One day, however, the usurer thought he should like to balance accounts. He did not quite see his way any farther. His Grace had a life interest in about 150,000*l.* a year, and had spent something more than the net purchase-value of it, according to Badwig's calculation, which was presumably accurate. Then his Grace was already married, and he had no reversions of much consequence. Badwig thought of all this very patiently, and then called for his little bill. 'I want my money,' said Badwig, in plain terms. 'You don't say so, old man!' replied his Grace, with perfect good-humour. 'No larks,' remarked the money-lender, in a dry hard voice. Then the Duke rounded on him beautifully. It would have been an impressive lesson for any one who doubts the wisdom of our hereditary legislators to see how coolly the inexperienced peer handled the clever usurer.

In the first place his Grace of Gambleton referred the astonished Badwig to Slypuss, a gentleman in his own line of business; and Slypuss insisted upon a detailed account of the transactions upon which Badwig based his claim. Badwig pleaded that his accounts had been all passed as correct, and showed sheaves upon sheaves of documents bearing the ducal signature. Slypuss, acting for his noble client, talked only of the Central Criminal Court; and it is a pleasing fact—as evidencing the mental superiority of our upper classes—that the roystering, good-humoured, free-handed patrician showed himself such an excellent man of business when put to it, that he literally frightened a West-end money-lender of great shrewdness and experience to death; not figuratively, but really. Badwig had no idea what a clever client his Grace was, and suffered for his mistake. So the Duke continues to run as many horses as ever, and is quite a popular character. An entailed estate managed in this way lasts a long time; and a peer is always a worshipful person in this great country.

One unfortunate victim to the infatuation of horseflesh, the Earl of Shortland, better known as Frank Vane, had a life of as bright promise before him as any young man in the three kingdoms, when



SLYPUSS.

unluckily his elder brother died, and made him heir to a peerage. Brave, generous, marvellously handsome, and by no means wanting in ability, the fatal gift of a title found him an officer on active service in India, and transformed into a guardsman, with no earthly business but that of loitering about to clubs and parties in London. The objects of a healthy ambition were suddenly withdrawn from him. He was sure of all that the authorities at the Horse Guards could do for him, and had no incentive to make a name for himself. He could not better that which he had got already. It ranked him with the Howards and the Nevilles; it dated almost as far back as our history.

What, it may be asked, is a bright young fellow, full of health

and high spirits, to do under such conditions? Time hangs very heavy on his hands. Reading and writing are 'bad form;' and a man must have an occupation, some one thing, at least, that will enable him to get rid of his superfluous energy and animal courage. A European war would have saved him. He had the making of a great captain in him, for his troops would have followed him wherever he led. A winning kind-hearted man was Frank, and everybody liked him in his regiment, from the drummer to the colonel. Had his elder brother lived, Frank would have become the pride of the Vanes; as it was, he went on the turf.

The usual results followed. He had not much to lose, but what he had he lost. Family fights had split up his inheritance, so that



THE FAMILY SOLICITOR.

when he came into the peerage, after his father's death, the family solicitor looked grave, as he and the new Earl went into accounts together. Frank, however, was not fond of reckoning, and much preferred the society of Mr. Badwig (who was also an attorney) to that of his family solicitor. Badwig talked to him of certain winners for the next Derby and Oaks, for the Chester Cup, and for Goodwood. And as far as 5,000*l.*, or even 10,000*l.*, would go, was not



Badwig there to serve him? Indeed, Badwig soon took his affairs altogether in hand, and as Lord Shortland was not so shrewd a customer as the Duke of Gambleton, he had speedily no affairs left to manage. Badwig told him, one settling-day at Tattersall's, that he could never raise another shilling till his son came of age, and advised him to go abroad.

'What for?' asked the Earl curtly.

'Oh, I thought you might just like to save something out of the fire,

you know, my lord,' replied Badwig, sinking his voice to a whisper; 'and—and—well, leave me to manage with some of them.' The money-lender winked with much humour as he made this proposal.

'I shall pay my bets,' said the Earl, 'though I walk out of this yard without a guinea to call my own.'

'Well, if you will, my lord,' replied Badwig—'No offence, I hope?'

The soldier-noble gave a glance of haughty contempt at the usurer, and turned upon his heel. Lord Tilton passed just then, and the two peers walked up Grosvenor-place arm-in-arm.

'I'm cleaned out,' said the one noble Earl to the other noble Earl; 'my things will be sold. Will you have any of the horses beforehand?'

'What, going to the hammer?' inquired Lord Tilton coolly. 'By Jove! that's a neat cob waiting for Gambleton, isn't it?' and his Lordship remarked the fine points of the Duke's horse, which was being led about by a groom. Then he added absently, 'Are you, though, really going to be sold up, Frank?'

'Yes,' said his companion, yawning.

'The dooce you are!' remarked the Earl of Tilton; and both noblemen separated at Hyde Park Corner as though nothing particular had happened. After all, too, ruin does not make so very much difference to an Earl. It never means so low a thing as want.

Lord Tilton, also on the turf, was a very different sort of person. He was an autocrat of the stable and the racecourse. The second son of a successful building speculator, he had no end of money, and kept a prudential hold of it. It is astonishing how much enjoyment can be got out of a large income cautiously handled; and Lord Tilton had it all. The British nation too, in order to show how ardently it loves and admires a man who keeps his money well together, made Lord Tilton a Doctor of Laws, a Knight Grand Cross, a colonel, a magistrate, and a Privy Councillor—all because he was the offspring of a rich man, who had himself remained rich; and, of course, because he was also a Lord. Needless to say he was not a lawyer, nor a military man, nor a politician; but we delight to invest our nobility with all the good qualities and virtues under the sun. Did not the wonderful Lord Furby lately turn up somewhere as president and chief of a company of gardeners? Wherefore, then, should not Lord Tilton, who certainly had not two ideas be-



yond his own amusement, be invested with judicial powers, and decide upon the characters and liberties of his fellow-subjects?

For the rest, his lordship was quite a leader of society. His aptitude for horseracing got him, as a matter of course, elected commodore of a yacht club, and he was as potent at Cowes as at Newmarket. He gave excellent dinners. A seat at his table was considered one of the honours of the turf. Ladies were very fond of him, and he was

very fond of ladies; so that there was no love lost between them. It was not safe for even his brother magnates to offend him. The mighty owner of Goodwood was made to smart for some slight, or fancied slight, he had offered to Lord Tilton. His lordship's colours were always popular among the bookmakers. He was



THE MASTER OF THE BUCKHOUNDS.

never even suspected of any unsportsmanlike act, and was universally cited as an ornament to his class. He was decidedly a peer who took his pleasures wisely, and enjoyed them on moderate terms.

It is a pity poor Hattington, who was Master of the Buckhounds, did not follow Tilton's example. Tilton was quite as great a dandy—quite as much admired by women and envied by men—as Hattington in his glossiest days. The difference between them was that Tilton only paid a fair price for his amusements, and that Hattington emptied his purse for them. So good-bye to a fine place in the Household when the Tories come in again; also good-bye to much beside. A brilliant soldier, a scholar, a courtier, a fine gentleman, and a man of the world, he has had himself sold out of house and home and happiness, to play at games beneath the intelligence of a respectable goose.

As for Lord Falmouth, brave Boscawen's heir—the Bayard of the turf—let us wish him well out of it, among his Cornish woods at Tregothnan. There is other work for such as him to do. Worth and goodness and courage should not be wasted at a horserace, for horseraces in our day are rather trials of cunning than trials of speed. And as for improving our breed of cattle, we are breeding a great deal too fine already. Our streets are filled with long-legged brutes which have neither substance nor endurance, and are only fit to bolt and tumble down by turns.

Next, there is Lord Eskdaile, with a rent-roll larger than the civil list of a continental King, and the accumulations of hard-fisted generations, sold up, and sold up again, smashed, resmashed, and the rest of it, *ætat.* twenty-five. It is a sad pity these big fortunes should be put into the hands of children, only to ruin them body—and, yes—body and soul. Money is a fine thing, fit for most splendid and beneficent uses; but money in the hands of a tipsy boy goes mostly to the devil, and takes him with it.

Earl Dewsbury, too, almost the noblest lord in England, bound in the same direction, and dragged with his two coronets through a police-court about a queer horse case, *ætat.* sixteen—yet no tutors or guardians daring to interfere with him! Truly we Great Britons are a wonderful people!

X.

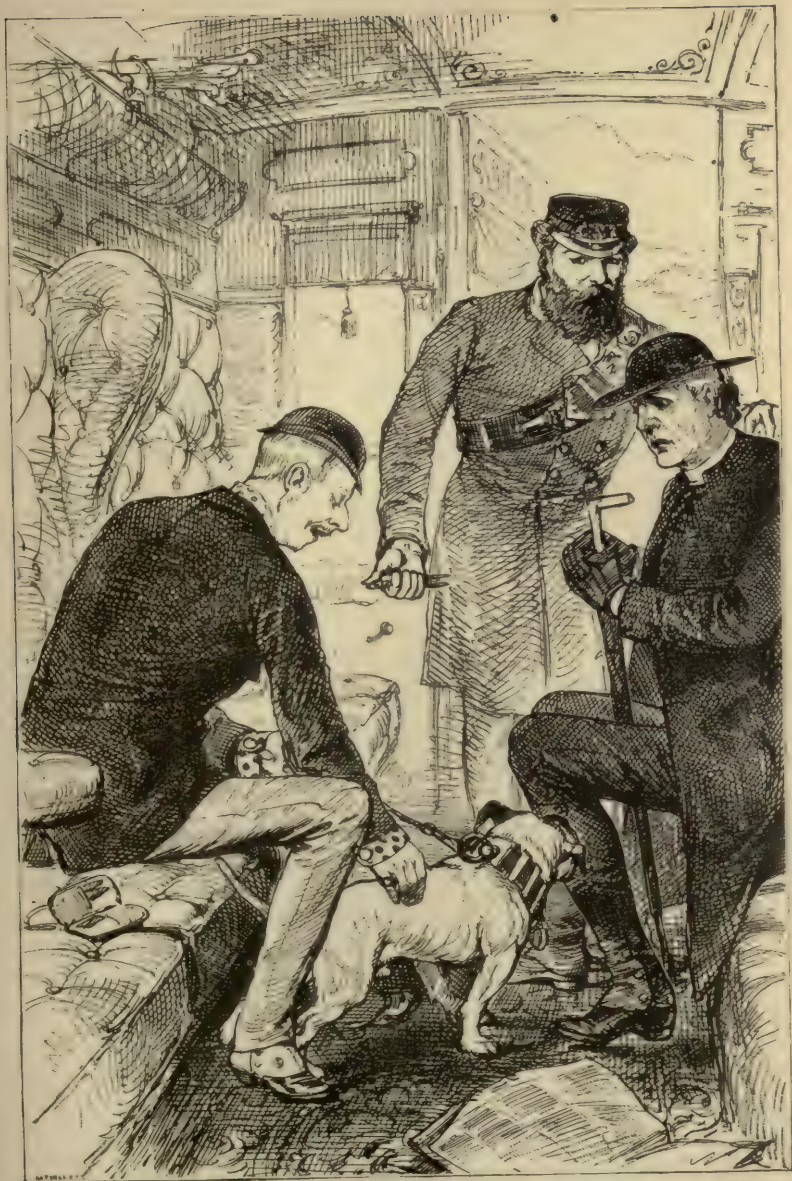
SPENDTHRIFT PEERS.

ONE day a mild clergyman, travelling in a railway carriage, had a ferocious dog set at him by a young gentleman on whom his eyes had never had the pleasure of lighting before. He remonstrated, and even complained to the guard; whereupon the young gentleman, amazed at so much impertinence, exclaimed, 'I am Lord Chuckstone!' The guard reddened, and, nudging the divine, advised him to back out of the case, else it might be the worse for him.

Lord Chuckstone was at that period engaged in making ducks and drakes out of a by no means large fortune. His noble father



had already passed through the Bankruptcy Court. He himself was walking thither at a much more rapid pace than his progenitor, and was deriving much less enjoyment from his ruin. But though he was a rake, a spendthrift, a tipsy rough, and a loose fish in every way, he still retained prestige enough to make an inoffensive parson cower, and to shoot respectful horrors through



ONE OF LORD CHUCKSTONE'S PRACTICAL JOKES.



the pulses of a railway official. If the clergyman had ventured to prosecute his lordship for assault, depend upon it he would have found himself in a very disagreeable pickle indeed.

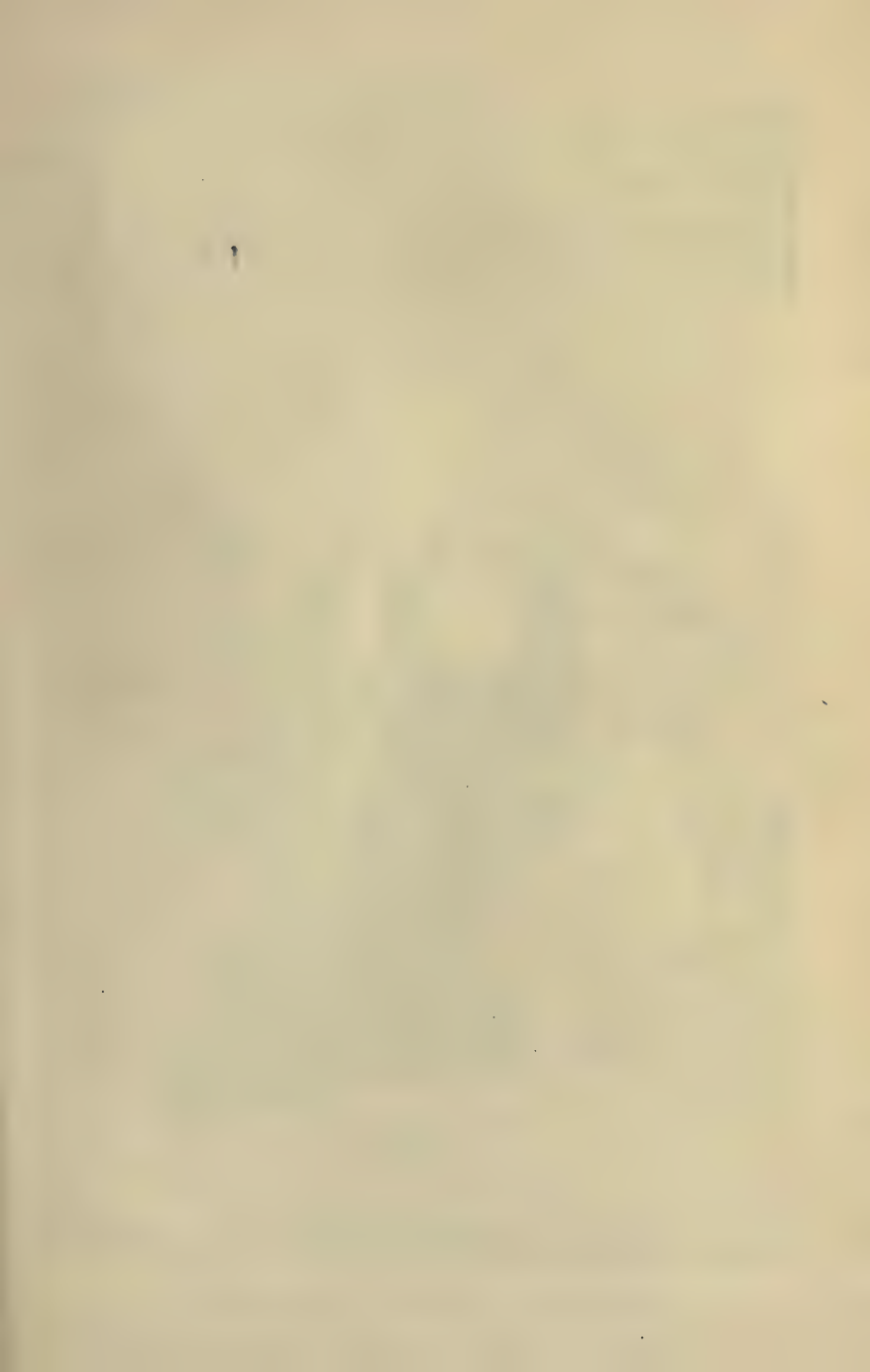
Englishmen are content to let noble young cubs ride roughshod over them. Thackeray's *Book of Snobs* has not cured a man or a woman of the national itch for Lord-worship. The individual who assails a lord finds public opinion blowing against him from all points of the compass. His affairs get out of gear in an unaccountable way; his friends give him the cold shoulder; evil things are whispered about his name; and if he owe money anywhere, his creditors will start up all of a sudden and pester him like wasps. It would have served our clerical friend nothing to have pointed to the hole in his leg made by the fangs of Lord Chuckstone's bulldog; he would have passed for a noisy churl, who liked to kick up a fuss about trifles. Even his Bishop would have lectured him sternly on the Christian indulgence which is due to the vagaries of youth. If a youthful potman had set his cur at the episcopal calves, a different view might have been taken of the affair; but we are talking here only about lords temporal.

Lord Chuckstone must have discovered the social advantages accruing from a handle to one's name from the time when he was a schoolboy and borrowed half-sovereigns from his father's valet. At Eton the tradesmen were proud to let him walk off with their goods; and at Oxford, where he sojourned but a brief space, owing to a persistent partiality for strong vintages and to some differences of opinion with the Dean of Christchurch, money-lenders and jewellers' bagmen put no limits to their faith in him. It made no difference that his father had paid his creditors twopence in the pound, and was debarred from taking his seat in the House of Lords by this unsatisfactory arrangement. The family estates were entailed, and Lord Chuckstone was bound to inherit them, even though the paternal debts remained unsettled to eternity. Besides, tradespeople have a lively faith that their noble debtors will always contrive to pay somehow. They will marry the rich daughters of merchants, or get some sinecure under Government, or hire out their names to grace the prospectuses of City speculations, and, becoming intimate with stock-jobbers, will make pots of money by recondite methods. A prudent money-lender will never part with the I O U's of a Lord, convinced that however much their value may sink below par, they will rise to a premium at some unexpected



day. This hope has over and over again proved fallacious, but the usurers hug it all the same.

A Lord's I O Us are often not worth the paper they were written on when that paper was new, and yet the laws of primogeniture and entail allow a noble insolvent to continue living on a handsome allowance, whilst his creditors divide amongst one another the few pence per pound that can be screwed every year out of an estate managed by assignees. There are family diamonds, plate, pictures, and books, which, if sold, could clear off all liabilities, but the creditors may not touch them. They are the heir's, who, on the strength of the booty thus held in reserve for him, will play the same pranks as his father, as will also his son after him, and so on *ad infinitum*. We might name certain noble families by whom the game of spoiling tradesmen has been carried on with a superb success during generations. Now and then a nobleman gets into





INTRODUCING A WELL-FEATHERED PROTÉGÉ.

brewls through bills of sale having flaws in them, and has to stand a siege in his own castle; but this is not often the case.

Sometimes, indeed, it does happen that the entail has been cut off; in which case the lordly debtor finds himself on the same footing as humble folk, whose goods are seized on by an order from the county court. But the kind feeling towards an impecunious nobleman is so universal that he must be an imbecile if he cannot continue to live on the fat of the land long after the avowable means of doing so have been withdrawn from him. His title is itself a fruitful field, which yields him crops until his last breath. He borrows money from middle-class sycophants, who would lend him their very shirts to have the honour of receiving him at their dinner-tables. He sponges upon younger Lords who have not yet run through their money, and also upon young tailors who have got commissions in the dragoons, and feel their stature increased by a cubit when he gives them an arm in public places. He accepts fees for proposing young snobs to his club, and commission-money from actresses to whom he introduces these well-feathered *protégés*, as pigeons that may safely be plucked.

As for clothes and cigars, he can often get them gratis from newly established tradesmen, who employ him as a tout. Small hotel-keepers will likewise give him free board and lodging on the same terms; and if his lordship be travelling in any part of the United Kingdom, provincial hotel-managers will be so glad to get hold of him that when he leaves, after a week's or a month's sojourn, he has only to say, 'Send me the bill to my club in London,' and this is enough. The bill is sent, and, of course, never paid. The son of an insolvent peer, having come in for a windfall, bethought him that he would satisfy his father's creditors, and inserted advertisements in the papers, calling upon all of them to send in their claims. He was surprised at receiving at least a hundred applications from country innkeepers, who had supplied the old nobleman with food and lodging on different occasions, straggling over a period of thirty years.

A commoner must not demean himself in this style, or he would be sent to the treadmill. But setting aside the fact that a Lord who is a peer cannot be tried for a felony except by the House of Lords, whose cumbersome tribunal has formalities and technicalities enough to nonsuit the boldest prosecutor, if not ruin him, besides allowing the delinquent plenty of time to get clear out of reach before the

cause came on for a full hearing; setting aside this fact, which secures an impunity in law-breaking to the peerage, the position of a Lord who is not a peer is also strong enough to defy criminal action. A Lord who forces his way into a man's house to commit a dastardly assault may be sentenced to a fine; but the magistrates who inflict it offer their own signatures as security for its payment. Another Lord, who is drunk, disorderly, and aggressive towards the police, sends a doctor's certificate declaring that he is too unwell to attend at the police-court, and is represented by his valet, who announces himself as empowered to pay the fine, 'whatever it is.' A third Noble Lord, who goes about cheating cabmen, is let off with not so much as a reprimand, the magistrate simply ordering him to pay his fares within a month.

Justice is paralyzed when she would strike at a scion of any lordly house. Some years ago a Lord did, by misadventure, involve himself in such an unclean scrape that it became impossible to avoid summoning him—not as a defendant, that would have been out of the question, but as a witness. However, it did not suit his lordship to face a cross-questioning which would have proved him a knave; so a conclave of family doctors and lawyers got up the report that he was dead. A coffin full of earth was buried in his stead, and he is flourishing in America at this present hour.

It must never be forgotten by an Englishman who has a quarrel with a Lord, that his noble antagonist is not a mere creature of flesh and bones, but a fetish who has numerous kinsfolk and connections interested in upholding his inviolability. And behind these stands arrayed the whole phalanx of the peerage, with whom the assailant would have to cope if he broke through the first lines of defence. It is often a profitable business to have a good hold on a nobleman, for noble persons will disburse liberally to avoid a scandal; but if the pursuer be one of those phenomenal characters whom gifts will not appease, he will be made to feel what intimidation and oppression can do. There are myriads of Englishmen who are, in some remote way, dependent for their income or their peace of mind on props which the ill-will of the nobility could pull away from them. Whether they be following a trade or profession, or be living quietly on their means, they must reckon with public opinion, and public opinion is swayed, directly or indirectly, by Lords.

A man's own wife, his parents, his children, may be found

arrayed on the side of the nobility if he show himself stubbornly bent on combat. They will have been 'got at' by aunts, cousins, or mothers-in-law, who are anxious to curry favour with some one, dependent upon the good graces of some one else, who is the stanch friend of the Lord in trouble. The prosecutor will be told that he is rushing to certain ruin and infamy; his womenfolk will wring their hands and let down their back hair; and by such means all spirit, except that of self-preservation, will be wrung out of the man. A young fellow who had been knocked down by a drunken Lord was so unfortunate as to return the blow and stretch his assailant in the gutter. He was in consequence disinherited by his uncle, who lived in China, and obtained a garbled version of the affair from the Governor of Hong-Kong, who was a cousin of the Noble Lord's father's attorney.

XI.

PEERS WITHOUT RENT-ROLLS.

It does not follow that because penniless peers are free to live by dishonest methods, all avail themselves of the privilege. There are Lords who never had any money to lose, and who have never been lucky enough to make any. They have not had even a decent dose of shrewdness, else they would have turned politicians, or won prizes in the marriage lottery. They have a weak-knee'd sort of rectitude, however, which has prevented them from becoming sharpers or blacklegs. They live on expedients, which are mean rather than reprehensible, and are much worse thought of than if they were scamps.

A peer who confesses himself poor dispels a good deal of the majesty which should hedge a Lord. A deposed king riding in a cab is a pitiful sight, so is a Noble Lord cheapening a cauliflower in Covent Garden. The honester he is, and the nicer in his scruples as to indulging in goods which he cannot pay for, so much the greater will be the contempt poured upon him by the very men who would moan most sadly over his aristocratic want of principle if he were to pluck them. One of the best excuses for the roguish antics of spendthrift Lords is that everybody pushes them to extravagance.

From the toady tradesman to the tuft-hunting clubman, all people sing out to them that a Lord is bound to keep up his rank. The private sentiment of us good Britons is that a Lord had better wear a watch he has not paid for than pawn one for which he has paid to settle with his washerwoman.

Somehow poverty obliterates the self-respect of Englishmen, so that a penurious Lord is mostly a shabby one. It is not so with continental noblemen. Many a French count of ancient stock and brightest honour has lived on 200*l.* a year without ever being ill-dressed or gloomy. He has not run into debt; he has not dabbled in joint-stock speculations or bartered his name as a bait to any public fraud; he is not stingy with servants or hotel-waiters, and he would scorn to marry an underbred woman who brought him a million francs in each hand. If the truth were known, he lives on bread-and-cheese and boiled beef, never smokes, and blacks his own boots; but for all this he is constantly neat, cheerful, dignified, and a nobleman every inch.

Nobiliary pride is something more in his case than the satisfaction of wearing an empty title. He clings to ancestral traditions as part of his religion; he truly believes himself to be a member of a superior caste of mortals, who should set lower men an example of honour and polite manners. The common people respect his delusion; and though they may make merry of his political opinions as antiquated, pronounce him a worthy representative of the epoch of chivalry. Nobody doubts that in a time of public danger he would come out with a sword, and rush off to charge the enemy in the front ranks.

So would Lord Bagobones, perhaps; but England has not been invaded for many a day, and our nobility *en masse* have never had an opportunity of displaying chivalry. The word has no sense as applied to an hereditary patriciate, few of whose ancestors have been ennobled for services in the field. Peerages are conferred in Britain on successful lawyers, party-voters, hop-growers, and merchants. The peers are a body of men who derive their lustre from the solid privileges and the power which wealth and social connections give; but there is seldom anything of ideal romance in the circumstances of their ennoblement, and when one of them grows poor it is no solace to his dignity to reflect that his grandfather was a prosperous pawnbroker in Cheapside, or an enriched soap-boiler, who voted, during twenty years, for Mr. Pitt. If you told such

peers as Lords Pudden, Chousington, and Chuckstone that the fact of their being Lords constrained them to be generous in thought and bearing, gallant in manners, true and upright in all their dealings, they would call this 'flummery.'

As for poor Lord Bagobones, bless his heart! he is nothing meaner than a sorry old curmudgeon, who wears greasy hats and a weather-stained cloak cut in 1830; but he is as upright in dealing as his tradesmen ancestors were before they got the court gilding daubed on them. He would not give a waiter sixpence, because to do so would deprive him of part of his own dinner, which would be absurd; and he would not emit noble sentiments in favour of any one who was persecuted, because this might put him wrong with other noble persons, and make him feel foolish.

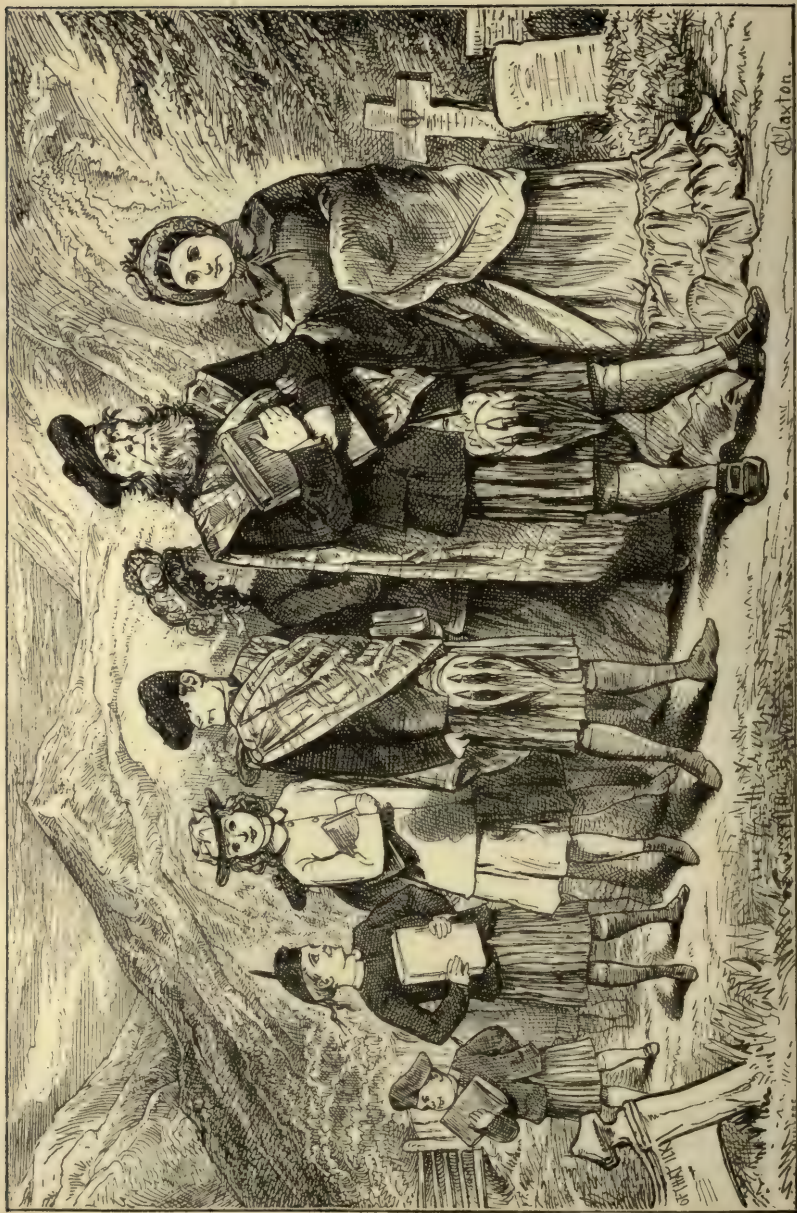
Lord Bagobones proves his nobility by being cautious in word and deed. Sometimes he rambles among the tables of his club dining-room, sniffs at the good things which other men are eating, and gets invited to dinner. He accepts without hesitation, and eats his fill. But his hosts must not expect to be regaled with any of the light wit and graceful chatter which would flow from the lips of a French nobleman, who deigned to be entertained by a person of rank beneath his own. To begin with, French noblemen of true stock are very particular whose invitations they accept. Lord Bagobones would dine contentedly with his father's shoemaker; and his talk during the meal would be chiefly made up of 'You don't say so!' 'God bless my soul!' 'Capital joint this;' 'Thank you, I will take another glass.'

Poor Lords generally avoid one another like the nightmare—anyhow, you never see two of them together. Lord Bagobones has never been met in the company of Lord Gryle and Grissle, who has a hat rather worse than his own, and a famished look altogether. Lord Gryle, however, makes six hundred a year by the curious expedient of delivering certificates to patent-nostrum vendors. For a long time he figured in the advertisement-sheets of newspapers, as the grateful acknowledger of benefits derived from 'Purger & Co.'s Drastic Pills.' Next he recommended mankind to run and buy a certain corn-plaster. Shortly afterwards, rheumatism seems to have got a bad grip of him, for he testified to the agonies he had suffered till relieved by somebody's electric waistcoats. Then his hair fell off, and was made to grow again by the 'Messrs. Buncombe's Capillarine.' Nature would appear to have exhausted her in-



genuity in afflicting Lord Gryle and Grissle with ailments which the inventive faculties of man forthwith healed. The last thing heard of him was that he was curing himself of a violent attack of gout by drinking first-rate sherry at ninepence a bottle.

Amongst other poor Lords, the Earl of Barrenmuir deserves notice, for he is a Scotchman, and Scotchmen are exempt from the reproof of non-chivalrousness which attaches to English peers. Lord Barrenmuir's ancestors were Highland cut-throats and cow-stealers—neither better nor worse in this respect than all the other clans north of the Border. They were continually at feud with



LORD BARRENMUIR AND FAMILY ON THEIR WAY TO KIRK.

other clans; they robbed and fought, had the itch every man Jock of them, and got drunk whenever they could do so at their neighbour's expense. Three hundred years ago, when the larder at Barrenmuir was empty, the Countess used to serve up a pair of spurs in a dish, as a hint to her lord and his sons that they must shift for their next meal by going in quest of black Lowland cows; a century ago, the present Earl's grandfather was still resisting the advance of civilisation tooth and nail, and cursing the Hanoverian dynasty daily in the richest brogue.

These pious family recollections—which abound in all the great households of Caledonia—cause Scotch Lords to lift their heads high. They are parsimonious after the manner of their countrymen, but rudely hospitable; they husband their bawbees, but do not stint their liquor. The Earl (or Thane) of Barrenmuir resides on his Scottish estate and never travels to London, for he is not a peer of the United Kingdom, and cannot afford to become a representative peer of Scotland. There is nothing mean in his poverty, for he attempts to make no show. He supervises the breeding of his cattle, sends the game on his estate to market, collects his rents in person, and eats sheep's-head for dinner more often than roast beef. His tenants, dependants, and all the county families still look up to him with reverence as the chief of a great clan; and it detracts not from his magnificence that he should have nothing better than a battered old coach, drawn by a pair of plough-horses and driven by the gardener, in which to send his wife when she pays her New Year's visits.

Every Sunday Lord Barrenmuir and his red-haired family, some dozen strong, walk to the parish kirk, and listen patiently to the hour and a half's sermon which the minister preaches; nor does the Earl omit to argue the theological points of it with the preacher over a bottle of whisky later in the afternoon. He is a rigid Presbyterian, a Tory, and a thoroughly well-read shrewd nobleman, though not a jocular one. Immensely proud of his rank—though patriarchally so and without conceit—he recognises the duties which it lays on him, and is a kind husband, father, and landlord, as well as a stanch fireside politician. He and a French Legitimist Marquis would understand and esteem each other immediately; but it is not easy to specify the kind of foreigner who could admire Lord Gryle and Grissle or Lord Bagobones.

There is no need to say much about the poor Irish Lord, for the

only paupers in Ireland are the peasants and village schoolmasters. The rest of the people have enough for their needs. If here and there you meet with an impoverished Lord, he exhibits no characteristics that can distinguish him from the ordinary ruck of his countrymen. English education has given him a kind of varnish, and native wit prevents him from ever seeming quite so poor as he really is. He is more addicted to doing wild things than a poor English Lord. He will entangle himself in disreputable law-suits, or get his name bandied about in connection with a promise to marry a widow of forty-five. He is often a place-hunter, and a writer for the newspapers. Generally he ends by recovering affluence with a suddenness which none can explain. It would be too much to affirm that this suddenness had invariably something honest at the bottom of it.

XII.

VIRTUOSO LORDS.

MUSIC and the drama have so many votaries in the peerage that, if it had pleased these Noble Lords to club their resources and make an appeal to other plutocrats, they might long ago have established a national opera and national theatres in London, Dublin, and Edinburgh. They have done nothing so patriotic, and will see the British public hanged before they go out of their way to amuse or instruct it. The system of party government, as carried out amongst us, obliges the governing classes to resist all endeavours of the people to give themselves refining amusements out of the public money.

Most rational people are agreed that there should be in the capitals of the three kingdoms a state theatre, devoted to performances of the best plays in the British repertory and to the encouragement of modern dramatists; but who would dare to propose a grant for such establishments? If the Liberals did so, the Conservatives would withstand the innovation, with the entire clergy at their backs, in the name of public morals; if the Conservatives made the attempt, the Liberals would raise a yell that the working man's money was being taken to provide amusements for the upper and middle classes, who could well afford to pay for their own

amusements. The Opposition would, in either of these cases, emit sentiments wonderfully true and just. The Liberals especially could make a telling point by contrasting the public-spiritedness of the patricians of Rome and Venice with the selfishness of the British nobility; and by pointing out that, if the latter are really anxious to see the national drama properly enthroned amongst us, the correct way of setting to work would be first to build the theatres, and then ask Parliament to endow them, a proposal which would probably be refused with unanimity.

State theatres will doubtless be built at last; but not in the days of primogeniture and entail. When the breaking up of colossal estates restores the yeoman class and diffuses wealth more equally throughout the land, those who remain very rich—and they will be mostly manufacturers and bankers—will stand on a more level footing with the rest of the community, and be more sensibly disposed to make common cause with it for the promotion of the general well-being. At present the peers are so rich that they can satisfy any artistic whim out of their own pockets, and see no use in calling upon the vulgar to participate in their enjoyments. They take their pleasures selfishly among themselves, and bar out all who are not of their own ‘sets.’

The Earl of Doubleday is one of the most *virtuoso* creatures alive. He has a picture-gallery, which would be the pride of a public museum, and he admits none but his friends to see it; he spends thousands of pounds yearly on statues and rare pieces of furniture, ancient tapestry, china, and armour; but once these treasures of art have crossed his threshold they are as good as interred so far as the public eye is concerned. The Duke of Buildingland is another proprietor of wondrous art-treasures; but his noble father would never allow the public to visit them, because, said he, the boots and shoes of the multitude played havoc with his carpets.

If the works of art which grace the galleries of these and a hundred other British peers were put under one roof, the result would be a collection more splendid than could be formed out of all the continental museums combined. Let it be recollected that every war and revolution which has disturbed the Continent for the last ninety years has caused art-treasures to flow towards England, where alone there remained money enough to buy them. France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Holland, and Germany have successively been convulsed by disasters which left their aristocracies too poor to

keep treasures that were not of gold. But the British aristocracy never grew poor; it bought up pictures and statues as fast as they appeared; and once these marvels entered the country they were never suffered to go out again.

The public have no conception of the artistic wealth which the British nobility have entombed—entombed as completely as if the lava of Vesuvius had buried it all in Pompeii. Sometimes, indeed, it will happen that a Noble Lord will, after much pressing solicitation, lend his pictures for a week or two to the South Kensington Museum; but the loan is always made grudgingly, with an amount of fuss intended to enhance the condescension of it, and it never includes the gems of the owner's collection. The noble example which Sir Richard Wallace set by inaugurating the Bethnal Green Museum was generally scouted as truckling to advanced ideas, and thoroughly 'bad form.' So far from being desirous of propagating the culture of art, the lordly picture-owners of Britain will not hear of allowing their pictures to be copied; so that, when a fire takes place (as at Blenheim and Warwick Castle within recent years), many a painting which copies may have immortalised is burned out of men's very memories.

So far is this dog-in-the-manger spirit pushed that England is the only country in Europe which has not a single creditable provincial museum; and this though it has a dozen provincial cities wealthier than most foreign capitals. There are millions of Englishmen, Scots, and Irishmen who have not the faintest conception of what art means; for they can never see a decent painting or piece of sculpture, unless they travel to London. Some of the richest Lords actually have the face to bid against the trustees of the National Gallery; and many a snug job has been privately carried out between Commissioners of Works and grasping peers who coveted such and such a costly painting for their own private galleries. Speaking generally, it may be said that the pictures which find their way into the national museums are those which Noble Lords did not consider worth buying.

The Earl of Doubleday loves music as well as art, and is a regular *habitué* of the Opera. But it hurts his lordship to hear the best songstresses warble out their notes for the uncouth public ear. His idea of musical enjoyment is to have quiet concerts in his own drawing-room, and to hear Mesdames Patti, Nilsson, and Albani sing him songs which they sing nowhere else, set to music composed



LORD DOUBLEDAY'S AFTER-DINNER DIVERSION

on purpose for him by geniuses who make him dedications of their productions.

It destroys all this grand signor's relish in a pleasure to see the rest of mankind taste of it. He so hates the multitude that, being possessed of a handsome Opera-house, he kept it closed for years sooner than reduce the heavy rent he asked for it a single penny. He could well have afforded to let the place for nothing, for he has 300,000*l.* a year; and if he had been the art-patron he pretends to be, one might have thought he would have gladly seized on this opportunity of enabling an operatic manager to collect an incomparable troupe, and organise a brilliant season, with a mind exempt from pecuniary cares. But in the way of music Lord Doubleday holds, with most other peers, that after all there is none like the chinking of gold. If the pompous, over-fed, over-millions creature could make a little money by debarring the public from any form of intellectual enjoyment, he would not scruple to try; he would not care if all the fiddles in Europe were broken, so long as four remained to gratify him with sonatas from Beethoven in his back drawing-room after dinner.

Lord Feedham is another type of the dramatic *virtuoso*; and this one went the length of building a theatre, and fitting it up with violet velvet, satin, and gold. But he did these things for Miss Kitty Wren, who was jealous of Miss Maggie Starling, for whom Lord Kute had erected a playhouse, furnished with blue and silver. Lords Feedham and Kute are, or were, passionately fond of songs, breakdowns, and jingling music; but they were fonder of Miss Wren and Miss Starling respectively; so it came to pass that these damsels, having a theatre apiece, proceeded each to make her boards serve to her own glorification, and no one else's. At the Doric, Miss Wren covered herself with as many diamonds and as few clothes as possible, and sang out of tune; Miss Starling kicked up her heels at the Ionic; and at both houses the manageresses would not hear of engaging actresses who were better performers than they.

It has often been asked why the British stage is in such a degraded condition, and the writers of those cautious organs, the daily newspapers, have offered a variety of specious explanations of the thing. But they would not venture on exposing the real truth, which is this: that Noble Lords, with more money than brains or good breeding, put a high premium on dramatic dulness by pitch-



forking any personable wench who hits their fancy into the position of manageress, giving her *carte blanche* to hire other disorderly wenches, and to put upon the stage what musical inanities and turpitudes she pleases.

In Paris, public opinion would revolt at this outrage upon decency, and pelt the disreputable play and players off the boards with baked apples. But who would dare to pelt the *protégé* of a British Noble Lord? The audience who fill the well-cushioned seats of these theatrical bagnios stare with ecstasy at the gaudy trappings on the walls and the women; they ogle the Misses Wren and Starling with a prurient curiosity and secret admiration of their good luck. If any one dared to hiss he would speedily find himself in the street, attended by a policeman, who would charge him with being drunk and rampageous.

Lord Jollyand is at once a better *virtuoso* and a truer gentleman than any of the peers aforementioned ; but he too has finikin ways of supporting art which would surprise an Italian prince with but a tenth of his income. He is a bit of a violinist himself, and delights in gathering instrumentalists in his palatial mansion, where he surfeits them with good cookery. After dinner he and they go to work with fiddle and bow, to the ravishment of a select circle of admirers, who never fail to remark, in stage whispers, that if his



lordship had not been born with a coronet, the highest rank as a musician would have been within his reach.

Perhaps it might have been. Anyhow, he recognises his fellowship with all wind and string performers by relieving such of them as pretend to be starving, or really are so. He is the friend of the Italian organ-grinder and the enemy of Mr. Bass. He vouchsafes his patronage to concerts organised by *débutantes*, and spoils many a tranquil governess by discerning in her the promise of a splendid

voice, and having her half-educated for the stage, where she howls once or twice, and then vanishes, none missing her. Lord Jollyand is rather a patron of bad musicians than of good, for the bad flatter him best. He was once heard to say that he wished the English working man could be induced to play on the fiddle like the German, or sing at his work like the Italian ; but he does nothing to further this consummation by promoting any national scheme of training in music. At heart he loathes the working classes as heartily as Lord Doubleday—rather more, perhaps, for he regards them as Vandals and Philistines, with souls wilfully averse from refinement. However, on the whole he is as worthy a specimen of the benevolent *virtuoso* as may be found in the upper ranks of Britain.

XIII.

MISERLY PEERS AND PEERS PARTIALLY INSANE.

STINGINESS is a vice or principle, avarice is a form of madness. There are plenty of Noble Lords who are stingy from instinct, or because it does not suit them to be liberal. The record of those who have been downright misers is not a long one, though this may be owing less to the actual scarcity of the species than to the extreme bashfulness of the British public in chronicling the foibles of their nobility. Forty years ago a famous French miser, the Marquis d'Aligre, was the talk of all Paris ; a miserly English lord would at most become a butt for the ridicule of a very small and select circle of equals. The mass of the people would not dare to allude to his infirmity above a whisper.

Considering that a semi-lunatic Lord is still allowed to legislate, to retain his magisterial functions, or his post of Lord-Lieutenant of a county and Chairman of Quarter Sessions, to laugh at him publicly would, for several cogent reasons, be highly inexpedient. The crack-brained magnate might vent his wrath with surprising virulence by foully slandering the joker till he was ruined ; if he murdered the man, he would incur nothing worse than to be relegated to a private house under charge of a doctor, and public opinion would, in its deep sympathy for the maniacal peer, decide that the deceased had got no more than he deserved.

It is pretty well ascertained nowadays that many of the blood-

thirsty kings of antiquity and the Middle Ages—Nero, Commodus, Caligula, Heliogabalus, King John, Ivan the Terrible, and others—were stark mad ; and when the history of the British peerage comes to be impartially written, the taint of insanity will be affixed to the acts of many a Noble Lord who, during his lifetime, was held to possess all the acumen and wisdom requisite for his rank. These noble dolts are not often bloodthirsty. Some of them have been kleptomaniacs, and hid away a good deal of pelf before their propensity was even suspected ; others have been dipsomaniacs, whose minds were perennially steeped in port and brandy ; others doxomaniacs of the quarrelsome sort, who were devoured by ambition to domineer over people and manage their business for them ; others, again, have been mere imbeciles.

The misers form a different class, for avarice is not incompatible with a vast amount of shrewdness—witness Elwes, the miser, who sat in Parliament for twelve years, and was a thoroughgoing patriot, who never let his private mania warp his judgment on the subject of taxes, but voted without grumbling for all the imposts needed to carry on wars abroad. A similar creature, whom we will call Lord Bunborough, was also mighty shrewd in his way, and could give the soundest advice to people in difficulties. A wag once took him by his weak side, and asked him for a guinea. My lord bounced, and told him to go and be —. ‘Half-a-guinea, then ?’ begged the wag with a whine. ‘Not a shilling,’ bawled his lordship furiously. At last, the suppliant having reduced his demands to a penny, which was likewise refused, laughed, and said that he had been joking, for all he wanted was a piece of advice. ‘Let me hear what you have to say, then,’ said the Lord, appeased. ‘Pause a minute,’ replied the wag : ‘if your advice had been worth a penny you would not have given me that either.’

At the time of the Queen’s coronation, the peers all sent their hats to Storr and Mortimer’s, the Court jewellers, that the measurement of their heads might be taken for the coronets which they were to wear at the ceremonial. Lord Bunborough’s hat was sent too, but it was in such a lamentable condition of naplessness, greasiness, and batter, that a shopman, finding it on the floor, where it had rolled off a counter, thought it must be a headdress that had been thrown there for fun by a shopboy of facetious turn, and had it kicked into the dusthole. By-and-by Lord Bunborough’s valet returned for his master’s hat, which was hunted for in vain.



till his description of it led to its being identified with the hat in the dusthole. The valet was rather glad, for he hoped the misadventure would induce my lord to purchase a new headdress; but he little knew the close-fisted peer, who, on hearing of what had happened, said simply, 'Have the hat picked out of the dusthole, and take it to be cleaned—but at the jeweller's expense mind.'

This legendary hat was worn till the date of the Queen's marriage in 1840. On this occasion Lord Bunborough, having

been invited to Windsor, was positively forced to rig himself out anew. He did so with infinite compunction, as may be supposed, and actually wore his new hat eleven years. In 1851, the Exhibition year, having made up his mind that he must pay another visit to his hatter's, he entered the Bond-street shop with the dismal exclamation : 'Here I am again !'

It was Lord Bunborough who, passing through Oxford-street on a cold winter day, heard a baked-potato vendor call to a boy to mind his can for five minutes, promising him 'a penn'orth hot' as a recompense. The boy had something else to do, so Lord Bunborough volunteered his services. He stood by the can *ten minutes*, and when the vendor returned, remarked to him : 'I have waited five minutes longer than you bargained for ; I think you ought to give me two penn'orth !'

Lord Bunborough never married, reflecting, doubtless, that a wife is a costly encumbrance ; his vast estates accordingly passed to a nephew, whom he rather liked, and whom he was continually trying to indoctrinate in the principles of economy. Calling one evening on the scapegrace, who had chambers in the Albany, he began to lecture him as usual on the benefit of rigid parsimoniousness. 'See, for instance, what a waste is here,' said he, pointing to a pair of wax-candles that were burning together. 'We are burning fire and lights for nothing. Let us walk about and talk in Pall Mall.'

Miserly Lords are much better off in England than misers in other parts of the world ; for Englishmen are so glad to have a Lord to dinner, that a close-fisted peer can live at free quarters by strolling from the house of one acquaintance to another. Lord Bunborough put his servants on board-wages, and had no food in his house but sailor's biscuit and tea, which he made for himself, and drank without milk or sugar. Towards mid-day he would set out on a ramble, and get his dinner at the table of one of his farmers or cottagers, or drop in as though for lunch at the house of one of the neighbouring gentry. He was not proud as to whose dinner he ate—the cold bacon and beans of the labourer pleased him equally with the hashed mutton of the parish clergyman. He had so many acquaintances and dependants that he seldom taxed the hospitality of any one more than three times in one year, but among them all he contrived to live for nothing.

Needless to add that the game on the estate of this magnanimous



nobleman, the fruit of his orchard, the vegetables in his garden, were all sold. He kept nothing for himself, and gave nothing away. If a peasant-boy had robbed him of an apple, he would not have prosecuted, but he would have requested the lad's parents to pay the value of the damage. It was said that Lord Bunborough only had one pocket-handkerchief after the miserly fit had fallen on him towards his twenty-second year; and that one was discovered in the pocket of a second-hand pair of trousers he had bought of an old-clothesman.

XIV.

STOCK EXCHANGE LORDS.

It is contrary to etiquette that a peer should be a registered stock-broker; but nothing hinders him from selling scrip by deputy, nor is there anything to prevent him from selling worthless scrip. Peers have dabbled considerably in all the Stock Exchange movements of the last fifty years. Railways, foreign loans, and joint-stock companies innumerable have been honoured by having them on their boards of directors; and the public have been honoured by not unfrequently seeing them grow rich with the shareholders' money.



The reader who has perused the preceding pages will not be surprised that no peer should ever have come to such signal grief in courts of justice as certain other directors and promoters have done. Given the sturdy strength of the peerage, as already explained, a Noble Lord has not only the power to shield himself from the irate prosecutions of despoiled shareholders, but he can also throw the cloak of impunity over his co-directors who are not peers.

How often have we heard that such and such a body of persons were inexorably bent upon bringing such and such a board of joint-stock impostors to justice! The prosecution was threatened with a loud bellowing of big words; it started, it limped, and broke down. Very often has this happened, and the reason was a sweetly simple one—there was some Noble Lord in the business, who, either to save himself or his relatives, had set his influence at work. A very notorious financier, who on more than one occasion has danced suspiciously near to the precipices of the criminal court, was humorously asked whether he was not afraid of ending his days with swindlers at Portland. ‘Oh no, I shall have better company than that,’ said he; ‘for on the day that I go there twelve peers at least will have to go with me.’

No wonder peers should be at a premium for directing companies. If a Noble Lord’s character can bear anything like the test of scrutiny—and so long as he is not on the turf it generally can—he

may command good terms for letting his name be put on a prospectus. His patronage means success. What a peer offers for sale the public will buy ; and if they are ruined it will console them greatly



to hear that his lordship is a fellow-sufferer in pocket. Noble Lords always pretend to be heavy losers by joint-stock directing, and people are to be met with who believe them.

Hotels, proprietary clubs, and aquariums are favourite ventures for noblemen with a taste for directing. They risk little or no money, the requisite number of qualifying shares, all paid up, being handed over to them as a gift. The chief service they render to the concerns in which they are interested is to puff them in society, discreetly or loudly, according as may be required. Certain peers are the directors, or paid touts, of a dozen different speculations, and a few among these have an unquestionable talent for 'floating' an affair. It would be a wonder were it not so. Most of the speculations just mentioned depend for success on the support of those social circles where a Lord's word is omnipotent ; and if you take a peer who is descended from a line of tradesmen, and in whom the generic instincts of the commercial traveller are still strong, you may imagine how briskly he goes to work in recommending a speculation in which he is interested.

The hotel-promoting peer is an especially keen customer. His hotel is always advertised to furnish the latest Parisian or American



THE STOCK EXCHANGE LORD.

improvements. It has been erected in a fashionable watering-place, or in a watering-place which its erection is calculated to render fashionable: it boasts a '*recherchée*' *table d'hôte*; an unrivalled smoking-room, with a view of the sea; a private Turkish bath and a rink, a ladies' coffee-room, and a spacious saloon suitable for corporation dinners, masonic balls, and wedding breakfasts. To prove its many advantages, the noble promoter lives in it himself during the first six months after its inauguration, and of course pays nothing for inhabiting the best suite of rooms and drinking the choicest wines.

The friends whom he has cajoled into trying the place, the snobs who fly after noble company like moths at candle-light, keep the establishment pretty full during the inaugural period, before the plaster is yet dry, and whilst half the house is still in the hands of the decorators. But so soon as my Lord packs up his portmanteau the public flit likewise. The second season of the hotel is a dismal failure; and just about the time when the last workman has put the finishing touch to the spacious saloon in which nobody has yet dined or danced, the hotel company is declared in process of being wound up.

For the next two or three years the big house remains empty; then the Noble Lord is applied to to make an attempt to galvanise the place into life by means of another company. This he prudently refuses to do, alleging many excellent reasons against hotel speculations, which would have been more timely had he put them forward when the original scheme was launched. He consents, however, to act as chief negotiator in a project for transforming the desolate building into a charitable institution—asylum, hospital, or school; and out of this transaction he again reaps money.

Money is the wire that makes us all cut capers, fleshly puppets that we are, so there is nothing strange in the propensity of Noble Lords to turn an honest thousand or two out of hotels or aquariums; but what shall be said of the peer who employs all his influence to float a knavish loan, contracted by the knavish agents of a yet more knavish foreign State? The Foreign Loans Committee published some queer revelations anent the share taken by stockbrokers, accredited diplomatists, and the rascally City editors of daily newspapers in promoting these swindles; but, as usual, not a word was said about the share of Noble Lords. Yet without the active co-operation of Noble Lords none of these loans, issued by bankrupt States, could have obtained a quotation.

When the Republic of Rio-Brigande, for instance, called upon the British capitalist to help it construct a line of rail from its seaboard to a gold-mine which had no existence, could not a hundred peers have shown up the imposture if they had not known that two or three of their order were interested in seeing the British capitalist hoaxed? The Republic of Rio-Brigande had over and over again been bankrupt. Fully a dozen times had its legislature declared solemnly that a free State was not bound to pay its debts; twenty-five times in nineteen years had its president been deposed by an insurrectionary *junta*; five other presidents had been murdered; civil war was the chronic condition of the country; and British emigrants who had been tempted to visit the country always returned thence just as they came, minus the money they had carried with them in their pockets.

There was not a geographer but knew that there was just about as much chance of finding a gold-mine in Rio-Brigande as in Soho-square; and not a traveller, statesman, or banker of repute but could have informed the public that money subscribed to construct a railway in this precious republic would be distributed among the gang of cut-throat scoundrels who happened to be in 'office at the time when it came out there. Nor could any of the promoters be ignorant of how matters stood, for the loan was issued on such conditions as would have rendered it impossible for it to be repaid, even if a dozen honest men had miraculously started up to take the affairs of the cranky State in hand.

Out of 4,000,000*l.* nominally subscribed not more than 1,500,000*l.* was really culled from the public pocket, and of this sum about two-thirds were distributed in commission fees among the noble and ignoble promoters, among newspaper writers, and in expenses for advertisements. Perhaps 500,000*l.* actually found its way to the Rio-Brigande, whose representatives became saddled with the obligation to pay eight per cent. interest from that time forth upon the whole 4,000,000*l.*, *i.e.*, 320,000*l.* a year! Admitting, as above said, that Heaven had taken pity upon the country, and unexpectedly conjured up a dozen honest men to rule it, how could these unfortunates have afforded to pay 320,000*l.* a year for a loan of 500,000*l.*? The entire revenue of the country, set down in the prospectuses at 5,000,000*l.*, hardly amounted to 200,000*l.* The customs duties and the tobacco-tax, which had been pledged to the bondholders in guarantee for the interest, and which were stated to yield between

them 2,000,000*l.* sterling, produced in reality, the first, about 30,000*l.*, the latter, nothing, for no Rio-Brigandian had yet been found who would consent to pay tax upon his tobacco.

It consequently happened that the 500,000*l.* became a toothsome prey to his excellency the president and his right honourable adorers, and led to a civil war, in which the opposition, who wanted their share of the spoil, issued virtuous proclamations, and urged on the common people to fight like men against the rulers who were robbing them. As soon as the virtuous opposition were installed in the Government they took what was left of the money and bolted with it. There are a dozen Rio-Brigandian statesmen living at this moment in European capitals on the proceeds of the loan which the British public guilelessly subscribed for them.

A commission was appointed by Parliament some time ago to inquire into the working of the Stock Exchange; but the heads of the whole commission might have been wagered against a dozen of turnips that my Lords Capelcourt, Conyngcove, and Mostynfylch, who were the chief organisers of the Rio-Brigande loan, would never be called up and examined. Not they. forsooth!



XV.

LITERARY LORDS.

IF literary talent be what most great writers say it is—education backed by hard work—the peerage ought to produce good writers by the score; for their lordships have not only the means of being better educated than any other set of men, but they have also leisure enough to turn their knowledge to good account. It so happens, however, that since Lord Byron's death not a peer has produced a book that will be read in the next century. Lords Macaulay, Lytton, and Beaconsfield are not cases to the point, for they were ennobled for the good work (rather political than literary) which they did as commoners. Lord Derby's translation of the *Iliad* was a fair prosy composition, already forgotten; Lord Houghton's poems (written when the author was Mr. Monekton Milnes) are specimens of easy, sometimes graceful, versification, which, at the best, rank his lordship many degrees below Browning the incomprehensible, Swinburne the redundant, and Lord Lytton II. the adapter (without permission) of French idylls. The Marquis of Lorne and the Earl of Southesk have written verses which nobody has read. The late Earl Stanhope indited an incomparably dull history of part of the eighteenth century; and the present Earl of Pembroke has penned an agreeable book of travels, in company with a doctor, who perhaps composed the best of it. Lord Dunraven has also written a good book of travels; Lord Dufferin's *Letters from High Latitudes* are not unworthy the descendant of Sheridan; and Lord Talbot de Malahide's antiquarian essays are very readable. These works may be said to sum up the literary budget of the peers and their offspring during the Victorian era.

Not but that other Lords have tried their hands at writing, and have been loudly complimented by reviewers. While Earl Stanhope lived, few dared to hint that he was not the equal, and the providentially appointed successor, of Macaulay. He had access to valuable State documents, and to private family correspondence, out of which a clever workman could have woven a truly good history. But Lord Stanhope dared not make use of his facts lest they should offend other Noble Lords. When dealing with a noble trickster of Queen Anne's reign, who had descendants alive, he touched him

tenderly with the feathery side of his quill. He had no gift of irony or humour, no eye for a point, no comprehension of a joke. A cathedral verger, who should write the history of a departed dean and chapter out of documents furnished him by these reverend gentlemen's grandchildren, who had stipulated for the right to amend this verger's proof-sheets, would produce just such a sapless, awe-stricken, word-involved book as that which earned for my Lord Stanhope laurels never reaped by Tacitus and Livy during their lifetimes.

Lord Stanhope, however, did deserve a modest literary name, for he worked his best; and it was only the fault of innate dulness, and of the social pusillanimity inherent to his rank, which prevented him from turning out more creditable work. He was so ploddingly industrious that, if he had not been a peer, he might have become an ornament to the editorial staff of the *Quarterly Review*. Perhaps the stings of critics might even have roused him out of his dulness.

The average literary peer is not industrious, for he seldom writes for money; which does not mean that he declines payment for his effusions, but simply that he is not driven to quill-driving by penury. He writes lazily for amusement, or because he wishes to air some of his notions on things in general. As he is never compelled to serve that apprenticeship of 'rejected contributions' which teaches patience and style to humble writers—for who would refuse the contributions of a Lord?—he fancies that a man has only to let his pen run to produce readable matter. His unchastened prose never improves: when the awkwardness of youth wears off it, much of youthful freshness wears off too, and a flippant slovenliness becomes its chief characteristic.

Readers of sporting papers or 'Journals of Society' will occasionally wonder who is that rampageously jocose and self-asserting contributor, who writes in slipshod English, and gives one the idea of a spaniel puppy chasing his own tail in the sunlight. He is well informed as to the doings of Mayfair and Belgravia; he alludes to coming marriages; indulges in a good deal of larking chaff about Society personages unknown to the million, but whom he designates by their Christian names abbreviated; and his passing references to persons and places show him to be an *habitué* of clubs and drawing-rooms, where the vulgar have no entry, except as footmen. This versatile journalist is generally a Noble Lord enjoying himself in print.

Editors make much of him, for the special information he brings is often valuable; and his articles, when slightly touched up by a

practised hand, may be made to read very amusingly. It has been noticed, however, that these contributors seldom remain long attached to the same journal; for if once their identity gets suspected they take fright and run away. More than one editor who has not been able to resist the temptation of bruiting the fact that he had a Lord on his staff has paid for his indiscretion by seeing his noble quilled bird waddle off cackling and hissing flurried protests.

It is considered derogatory to the dignity of a peer that he should mix in journalism otherwise than as contributor to *The Times* of letters on political economy or the cattle plague, duly signed with his name and dated from his country-seat. He may also write ponderous articles in select reviews. Still, the younger sons of small peers are tolerated in journalism after a fashion; although they are expected to be very reticent about their literary occupations when dining with their elder brothers and other superiors.

Not ten years ago a noble Irish Earl, too young to be very cautious, got himself into sad pickle by hinting at some Society secrets in a magazine edited by a lady. He was assailed by the wrath of a Duke's son, and an Irish colonel, connected with some other peer, sent him a challenge to fight. The Earl had to retract and eat humble-pie. It was said that he showed the white feather. The truth is he discovered what a mistake it was to rush into the hornet's-nest of aristocratic resentment. Doubtless his lordship's family solicitor read him a respectful lecture on his rashness. He has learned wisdom, and has not written *à la* Chesterfield since.

Another noble Earl is recognised as a journalistic authority on sporting matters, as he ought to be, having run through a fortune on the turf. This one is full of anecdotes, chiefly about himself. He does not sign his articles, but continually alludes to himself by his full titles. If discanting on the points of a horse, he compares it to one that formerly graced his own stable; if praising a jockey, he says that the best guarantee of his worth is that he once carried the Earl of So-and-So's colours; every race he describes reminds him of one in which the aforesaid Earl either lost money or won some.

Poetical withal, he quotes humorous doggrel of his own with a staggering self-appreciation not allowed to meaner mortals; he also goes far, and frequently out of his way, to quote old jokes which he made at Tattersall's or in the House of Lords. This noble Earl is exceedingly touchy about editorial reproof. Suppress



A NOBLE IRISH EARL IS CONSTRAINED TO EAT HUMBLE PIE.

a line of what he writes, and you see the last of him. He is believed to earn 500*l.* a year by his sporting letters.

Few Noble Lords venture on novel-writing. One or two are reported to have tried the thing under assumed names; but have recoiled in disgust and terror on finding the whole pack of critics rise at them barking and biting. Lord Beaconsfield and the late Lord Lytton of course excepted, the only peer who has had the courage to publish novels under his real name is that same young

Earl who had to eat the Irish colonel's humble-pie. They were not good, but perhaps the coronet on the title-page made them seem even worse than they were. One opened the volumes, expecting, rather too inconsiderately, to find original views about high life, and one discovered—*vocem et præterea nihil*. One felt, however, that the author was eager to say more than he put in print. To use his own tersely Irish way of expressing himself, 'he would have liked to be bold if he had dared.' Lord Willox, indeed, published both novels and reminiscences; the latter on the strength of his having been aide-de-camp to the Duke of Thunderbolt. He was, however, only a peer's son, but he was a Noble Lord nevertheless by courtesy.



XVI.

A FEW CLOSING WORDS ABOUT NOBLE LORDS.

TIME would fail to speak of the legal luminaries who have enjoyed a dignified repose on the Woolsack; of the peers who are intrusted with the great commands of the army, though they have never smelt

powder; of Lord Pips filling one of our Vice-royalties, Lord Tuffly another, and Lord Panshanger, good honest man, a third. The connections of the late Earl Bustle alone who hold office, or have held it, would fill a good-sized sheet of foolscap, written out in a fine hand; and of foolscap such a record should be made, so that he, she, or they whom it fits may wear it. It would be hard to find a peer who has no finger in the public purse; and, indeed, there is no reason why a peer should not have the same chances of pay and distinction in his country's service as other folk. But it is dangerous and absurd to give employments of trust, honour, and emolument to any class of men, not because they deserve such rewards, but because they possess a title to which we have attached preposterous importance.

There are many good men in the peerage, and many wiser statesmen there than the House of Commons can show. Taking them all in all, they are a well-educated body of gentlemen—sharp in business, serviceable towards one another, and especially to their own relatives, haughty as regards the rest of the world, and just what one might expect the members of a highly privileged and grossly over-flattered caste to be. The virtues which they may each and all individually possess are their own; their vices are less the result of their own fault than the fault of the society which cringes to them, and would only have itself to thank if they were all ten times worse than they are.

To expect collective wisdom, honour, disinterestedness, and patriotism from the British nobility, is to expect fruits to grow where they have not been planted. Flattery breeds conceit, wealth selfishness, power arrogance, and idleness vice; therefore all these failings are well represented in the House of Lords, much as it may distress the average Briton to hear such a thing stated in so rude terms. Nothing that has been here written is intended to point scorn at those of the Lords who have publicly evinced qualities worthy of their station; it is only contended that the characteristics of the peerage as a body—their public-spiritedness, liberality, graciousness, and talents—are *not* on a level with that which the public might reasonably expect from an order so rich and potent. In other words, the House of Lords is a great obstruction to popular progress in the British Kingdom.



YOUNG WIDOWS.

I.

THE ALBUM.



TURNING over the leaves of his photographic album, any man who has seen much of the world will most likely pause to contemplate the faces of some pretty women whose *carte-de-visite* portraits he has begged, bought, or filched, at epochs when he set more than ordinary value on them. The value of such treasures may have been very transitory ; but the fact of their remaining in a collection proves that their owner's acquaintanceship with the



originals cannot have terminated disagreeably, for men throw the photograph of a jilt into the fire ; and it proves again that the intercourse cannot have been of a culpable character, else the tell-tale likenesses would not be left in a book exposed to all prying eyes. Who, then, are the women who are neither a man's sisters nor cousins, nor faithless sweethearts or naughty *protégées*, but whose comely features yet call up a smile with a train of pleasant thoughts ? The majority of them are simply Young Widows, whose acquaintance one has made at various times, either at home or abroad.

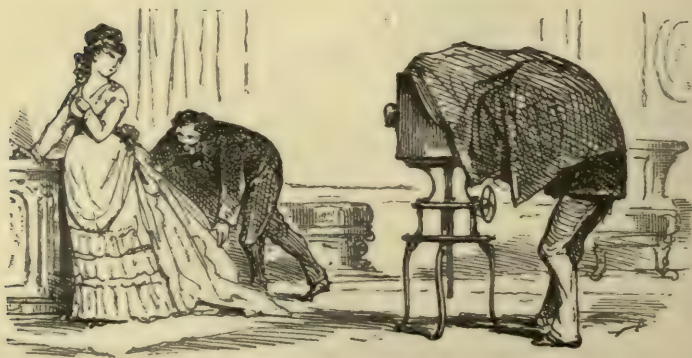


The pretty face first encountered in a continental railway-carriage, and which led to such a delightful friendship of a fortnight's duration at Ems or Spa ; the fair stranger whose lap-dog one saved from drowning in the Lake of Geneva ; the blue-eyed autocrat who held one in servitude during an entire homeward journey from India ; the lady whose horse bolted in Rotten Row ; the charming widow at Leamington who had such an angelic little girl,—all these, with many more, have found a place in the album, and the recollections which they conjure up are among the most entertaining in life.

There are portraits which make a comparatively young man feel aged when he gazes upon them ; and others which cause a pricking as of an old wound imperfectly healed. There are faces which evoke remorse ; and others of which a man says, as he scans each never-to-be-forgotten lineament, ' No woman will ever again make me feel what I felt for HER ! ' But seriousness and sadness are out of place in musing over those apparitions which flashed upon one for a brief space in life's toilsome journey. They are the butterflies of a summer's day—the sunbeams occasionally dancing across a path which, but for them, might have been dark and lonesome.

And since sunbeams are our simile, let it be remarked that science, which dissects everything, has found means to prove that even sunbeams are not all alike in their composition. They differ in their properties of warmth and strength ; some contain more colouring matter than others, and paint with a ruddier glow the flowers which they meet on their way ; as we see in the petals of tropical plants, which far out-dazzle the pale growths of northern climes. So it is with the more or less brilliant women of whom we are treating here ; for while some touch the memories of those who have known them with tints too light to shine long, others leave behind them hues of enduring vividness. Of these a man may sometimes be tempted to reflect that it was well he did not remain exposed to the ardent beams too long, or he would have been scorched.

This said, let us look through the album together.



II.

INTERESTING YOUNG WIDOWS.

WE pass over several of our album's leaves, and light upon the delightfully girlish face of a young woman dressed in a riding-habit, who, although certainly twenty-five, looks no more than eighteen. The small man's-hat, perched so coquettishly over her brow, shades a brace of eyes sparkling with good-humour; the lips are half parted in a smile of innocent fun: the delicately shaped nostrils appear to breathe, with undisguisable relish, the air of liberty. In truth, this photograph was taken just two years after Mrs. Prettie had been left a widow.

We have heard it said that another photograph (not in our possession), for which she sat whilst Mr. Prettie was alive, showed her under a much more dejected aspect, for Prettie was a tyrant of the sort who knew how to wring tears out of poor young women's eyes day after day for years: a fretful, waspish, dictatorial little man, with a sour face and a bilious heart, who was forty years old when he won his bride of seventeen, and took her from a quiet country parsonage to the dreary London mansion, which became thenceforth a very prison to her. Whatever she said or did, Prettie found fault with it. He allowed her no authority over servants, and no personal liberty, and yet was continually blaming her in sententious lectures because she seemed unequal to the discharge of her duties as mistress of a house. Under pretence of indoctrinating her into these duties (which women learn fast enough if they are but allowed to have their own way), Prettie went over the tradespeople's, and even the washerwoman's bills with her, standing by the table while she cast up the accounts with such trembling fingers and a head so flurried that she would make mistakes in her addition; whereupon, with a proud sneer of superiority, he would wonder when she could be brought to learn that two and two make four.

It was Prettie who gave orders to the cook, scolded the housemaid, fixed the time at which his wife was to take her drives, and would not so much as allow her to buy a dress for herself, he always choosing the materials, under the pretence that she had no taste. Moreover, this ape of a man took it into his head to be



iealous, and drove his young wife almost wild by his sarcastic taxing speeches. No woman ever gave a husband less cause for

disquiet than Mrs. Prettie, for she passed all her time planning how she might satisfy him; and there was not one of the six or seven scoldings, wherewith he favoured her daily, but she took penitently to heart, asking herself whether she could ever be cured of her faults, and deserve the kind word for which she hungered. For six years this life of wretched slavery lasted, grinding all soul and spirit out of the young wife, who had ended by persuading herself, in a despondent resigned way, that life is truly a term of probation, during which people are not intended to be happy.

And yet, when Mr. Prettie died, his widow, who had patiently nursed him through his last illness, cried all the tears out of her woful blue eyes; and if the suttee custom had been in honour amongst us, she would have thought it the most natural thing in the world that she should ascend the funeral pyre, to go and submit to another term of bullying in the spheres where Prettie was probably waiting to rate her for some omitted minutiae in his obsequies. However, by her husband's death the Young Widow inherited 2000*l.* a year; and there were not wanting friends who explained to her that the late Prettie had not taken all the cakes and ale of life into the grave with him.

It was some time before the sense of her emancipation broke upon the widow; but when it did come it came with enchanting power. To go where she pleased unrestrained, to wear what dresses she liked, to laugh at her will, to do good with her money—for she was kind to a fault—were luxuries which she was never tired of tasting. And just as the buds, long delayed in their bloom by a protracted winter, burst forth with surprising freshness at the first touch of warm weather, so beauty, grace, and wit shone out all together in Mrs. Prettie, till she heard men murmur—and not too low either—how lovely and gifted a woman she was.

This revelation must have been to her the most astonishing of all; for her husband had taught her to consider herself such a sorry dunce, such a hopeless little stick! But on these points also she soon learned that the world contained room for two opinions. In the sunny climes of Southern Europe, where the vines grow and the olives ripen, among the whispering woods of English shires, and the tumbling waters of Scottish streams, she heard soft vows poured into her ear, and it became eventually a question of difficulty as to whom she should choose among the many who spoke

to her in language so new and fair. No wonder that her first connubial venture had rendered her prudent.

She rented for a season an old manor-house on the Thames, and during the bright summer days she and a young unmarried sister





"AMONG THE WHISPERING WOODS OF ENGLISH SHIRES."

and a schoolboy brother explored by themselves the more sequestered nooks of the river. When autumn arrived they set out on a round of travel. They wished to see all the world, and were continually turning up in unexpected places. In the ruined Coliseum by moonlight; in the shaded stalls of Spanish amphitheatres on bull-fight days; round the rouge-et-noir tables at Monaco, where they risked five-franc pieces, and always won; and up the snowy passes of Chamounix, the joyous trio could be met, revelling in their freedom, like fawns in spring-time. Mrs. Prettie, as the matron of the party, played chaperon, settled the hotel-bills, and did not, perhaps, set her younger sister an example of the strictest economy; but she contrived to keep well within her income, while deriving from it every atom of gratification which money is capable of yielding.

She could not well have done better for herself or others, for she scattered gladness about her wherever she went; and with this reflection we leave her. It reached our ears not long ago that she had married her sister comfortably, set up her brother in life, and finally bestowed her own small hand upon a young and gay fellow, with an empty purse, but a large heart, whom she had selected, with the shrewd discrimination of Young Widows, for qualities which rendered him the direct antithesis of her first husband. Perhaps, if we had a mind to, we could find her address among the basking streets of a western seaside town, where she is the mistress of a happy home and the mother of crowing children—who can never suspect what a different face their mother would be now wearing if Providence had not summoned away the late Mr. Prettie before he had had time to refashion her amiable character in his own crooked mould.

The neighbouring photograph to Mrs. Prettie's is that of another Young Widow whose first marriage was not a happy one; but Lady Fallowfield had not to complain of a husband who ill-used her, for poor Sir John was the meekest mortal who ever bowed a quinquagenarian neck to uxorial yoke. Unfortunately, he was struck by paralysis when his wife was only a little more than twenty, and after this calamity lingered for eight long years before he made her a widow.

They were eight years that would have stretched the patience of a saint. The invalid gradually dwindled into imbecility, and was nothing better than a living corpse. It was impossible to cure him; there was not even a hope that his reason might return; and



his wife was fain to watch him die by inches, not daring to hope that his departure might be hastened, and yet unable to conceal from herself that every additional year of his useless existence was so much taken away from the time of peace which she might expect on earth.

She behaved admirably under the trying circumstances, the more so as she was not sustained by ardent religious charity, but simply by a strong well-knit idea of duty. By neglecting the poor cripple—nay, by leaving him to be tended by servants, as she might well have done without seeming to fail in wifely kindness—she would have been certain to see him die soon; but she would not stoop to such indirect complicity in the old man's extinction, and, constituting herself as nurse, tended, soothed him, and performed the most menial offices for him, as if he had been a child and she his mother. Doctors were at a loss for words in which to express their admira-

tion for a devotedness so rare and disinterested; and they repeatedly assured her, by way of compliment, that it was she, and she alone, who was keeping her husband alive.

What would they have thought, however, had they known that, while the lamp of poor Sir John's life so feebly flickered that a breath would have been enough to put it out, Lady Fallowfield was in love with a man in every way worthy of her, and whom she would have married had she been free? and that, moreover, by prolonging her husband's days, she destroyed her chance of a marriage with her lover, and indirectly caused his death? for, not being rich, he was unable to wait for her beyond a certain time, and was compelled to seek service in an unhealthy tropical climate, where he died. There are deeds done in the light which the world calls heroism; but there are others done in the dark which assuredly merit even a nobler name.

When the hour of Lady Fallowfield's release at last sounded, she was twenty-eight years of age, but looked five-and-thirty, and in mind she was even older than that. As a dead parasitical plant will impart its decay to the sapling round which it clings, so that moribund life which had been intertwined with the days of her youth had left on Lady Fallowfield many a symptom of moral blight. Had she been a devout Christian, the ordeal through which she had passed would have purified her soul from all dross, and left her full of angelic serenity; but it has been remarked that her religious convictions were not strong—indeed, she was almost a sceptic. So that, finding no comfort in the reflection that good deeds do not miss their reward, she sat down fretfully to mourn over her wasted womanhood.

From the time of her husband's death a subtle, but steady, deterioration was observable in her character. The mainspring of her noble actions being gone, the mechanism which had moved with such beautiful regularity came to a standstill. One day she roused herself with the impassioned cry that she would not forego her share of love and happiness; she would try to forget the past like a hideous nightmare, and, since the springtide and the early summer of her life were gone, would make the best of what fine days still remained to her. So she went forth with renovated beauty, and hunted for a husband.

Oh, what a fall was there! To have been magnanimous, strong, and wise; to have braved temptation and walked unwaveringly true

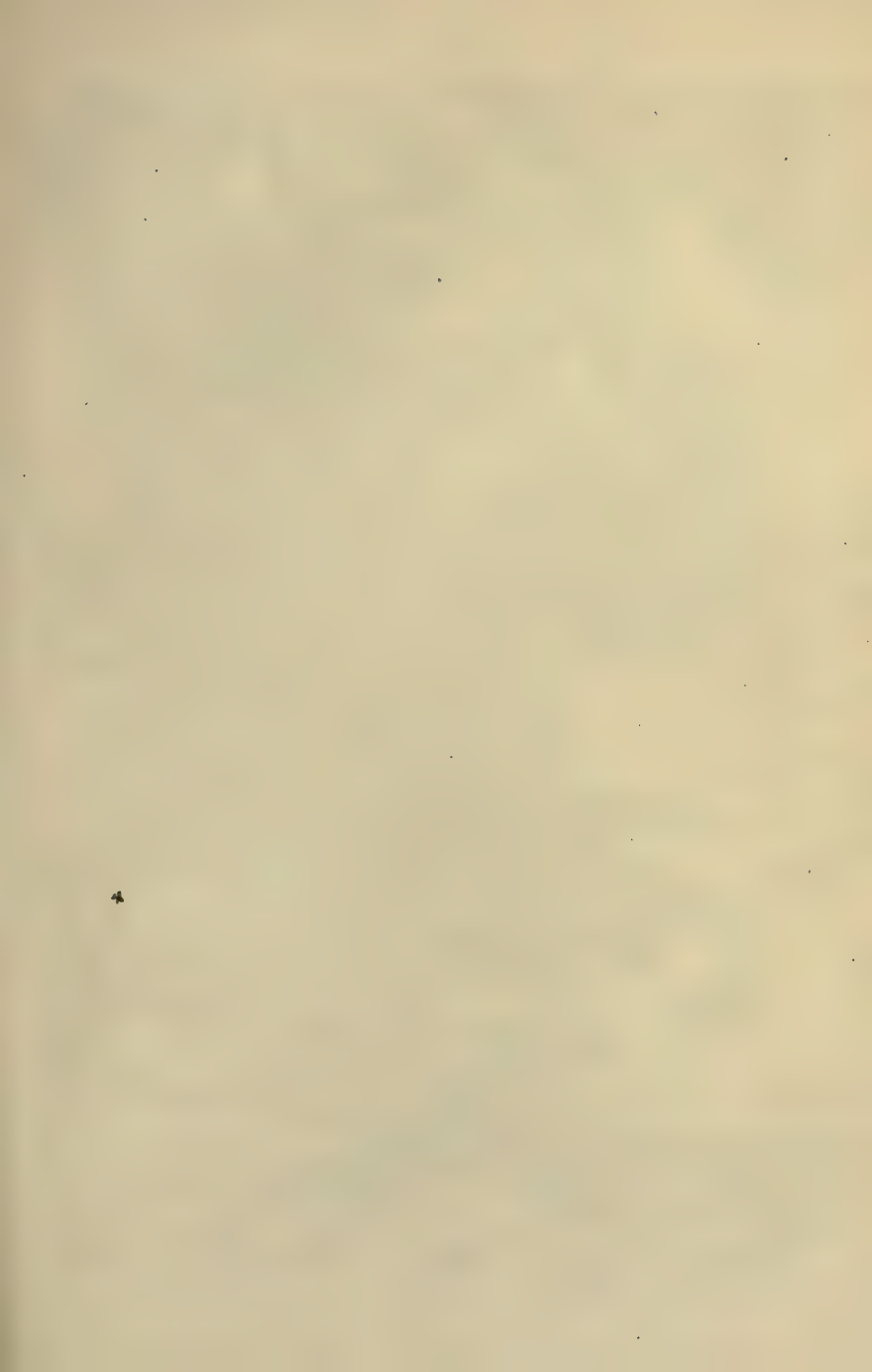
on the path of duty; and then, because, forsooth, the faith in her was not powerful enough to catch the echoes of the old man's blessing, sent to her from beyond the grave, to account all her life a loss, and to trample on the recollections of it which should have borne undying fruit! Yet so it was; and Lady Fallowfield cast off her aureolas as if, during those splendid years of resignation, she had been but a common actress playing the part of a saint!

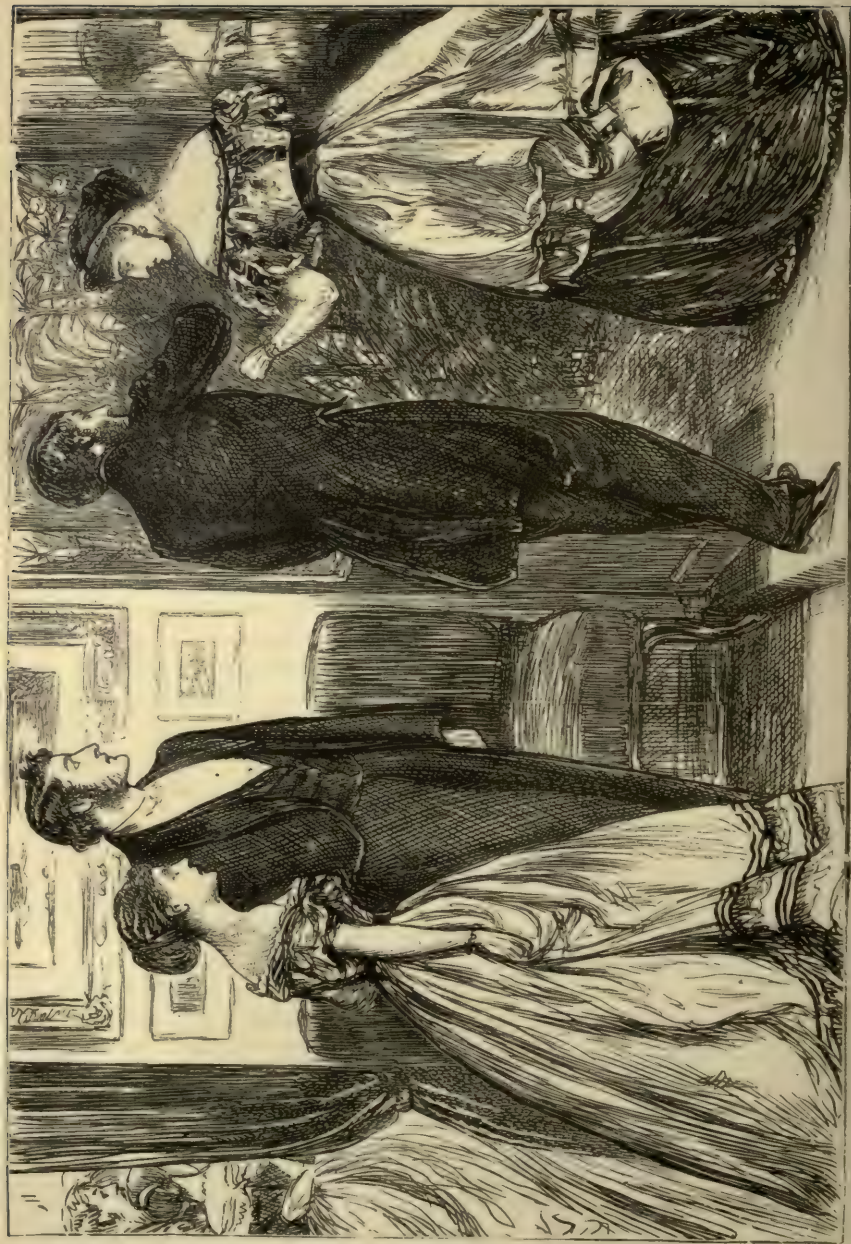
She became flaunting and noisy; she over-dressed—and, if the truth has been told, sometimes over-drunk—herself. She contracted a thirst for gaieties, and seemed bent upon making the whole of society talk about her wealth, extravagance, and flirting propensities. When people begin to squander that which they have taken a long time in amassing, they go to work at a prodigious rate: witness the misers who turn spendthrifts. But society—much kinder than one thinks—would not let the widow make ducks and drakes with her reputation; they alluded indulgently to her freaks as the eccentricities of an original, but grand, nature; and for a while Lady Fallowfield's strange doings were freely imitated in the circles where she had most influence, giddy flirts quoting her example to prove that women may be angels, and yet not straitlaced.

At last, however, a scandal transgressing the limits of what was permissible compelled the widow's truest friends to look grave, and rendered it desirable for her to take a change of air on the Continent. But even now, kind-hearted people—who, whatever may be thought, are often the rulers of public opinion—declined to regard her as a reprobate, and maintained that her mind had been affected by the loss of the companion who had drawn from her the best qualities that have growth in human nature.

In this judgment there was not mercy alone, but truth; for those who fall down a precipice have not the same possession of their faculties as when they stood securely at the top. When once the foot has slipped, who can tell what passes through the mind of the man or woman who is being hurried to destruction? Only those who have been seized with this vertigo of ruin *can* tell it.

So it came to pass that the circle of Lady Fallowfield's best acquaintances receded from her, and she fell into low company without seeming to be aware that the persons who now surrounded her, tricked and swindled her, were not of the sort among whom she had been accustomed to live. Drink had blunted her perceptions—for it was no longer possible to conceal that she drank—perhaps to





drown the first shoots of remorse, perhaps because in the reckless life she led continual stimulants had become a necessity.



Later on it was rumoured that she had passed under the dominion of an Italian scamp, half actor, half sharper, who boasted of his

conquest in low *cafés*, where he squandered the money with which she lavishly supplied him. We remember to have seen the pair driving about in a barouche at the Cascine of Florence—he, saucy and ridiculous, like a beggar on horseback; she, red of face and dull-eyed, but evidently besottedly proud of her disreputable moustached companion. A year later we encountered them again at Brussels. They had married by this time, and were staying at the Hôtel Bellevue, where Signor Galivanti's assumptions of grand-seigneurship amused the waiters, whilst his roysterous galivantings among the *corps de ballet* of the Théâtre de la Monnaie (in the stalls of which, on opera nights, he was always a conspicuous object) were said to drive his wife into jealous frenzies.

One evening, while the visitors at the Bellevue were seated at the *table d'hôte*, the hotel suddenly rang with fearful shrieks, mixed with volleys of execrations in a jargon of Italianised English. All the men rose from table and trooped out into the corridor, where some waiters had already opened the door of one of the ground-floor sitting-rooms, whence the sounds of strife proceeded. There, scattered upon the floor, were the ruins of the dinner-table, which had been overturned; and, crouching among the broken plates, with her hair down her back, and her red face bathed with the tears wrung from physical pain, appeared Lady Fallowfield, while Signor Galivanti stood jabbering over her with a riding-whip.

Sir John Fallowfield's widow had got tipsy again, and her scoundrelly husband had thrashed her!

III.

GAY YOUNG WIDOWS.

VOLTAIRE, in *Zadig*, tells an interesting story of how his hero pretended to have died in order to test the fidelity of his widow. The lady wept disconsolately for a whole day, vowing that she could not survive her lord. On the second day a handsome young clergyman came to console her, and she wept less; on the third day she and the divine had already formed matrimonial projects, which were only cut short by Zadig's timely resurrection. Zadig, as a philosopher, ought to have known better than to put his wife to a



SIGNOR GALIVANTI AND LADY FALLOWFIELD.

hazardous test; but having once done so, he was quite right to bear his disappointment with the equanimity which he seems to have shown.

Women cannot wear weeds eternally. Why should they do so? Once the first anguish of bereavement has been assuaged, they have to remember that crying spoils the eyes and frowning wrinkles the complexion. Besides, what amount of weeping could call the dead back? If tears had that reviving power, perhaps more would be shed of them than now—perhaps less. Who knows? Anyhow, it is certain that many Young Widows resemble Zadig's wife in accustoming themselves pretty quickly to their new-got freedom. They are obliged to do so, for this world of ours moves fast. The people who sympathize with a widow's grief to-day would be surprised at it a few months later, and would call her 'affected' if she wrapped herself up in solemn gloom, and pretended to mourn too long for 'the dear departed.'

Then, again, the majority of Young Widows are left unprovided for. It is seldom that a young husband has the means or the sense to insure his life for a sum sufficient to keep his wife in case of his death; so that if he dies suddenly, the poor creature is left in the most difficult of positions. She has departed from her parents' house and taken up new connections; she cannot resume her girl's life, nor continue her career as a married woman: if she have children her case is worse, and she has to look about with a keen eye for the means to support the little ones and herself. A pretty common case is that of the Young Widow who is left with about 300*l.* a year. The sum is a sufficient or a small one, according as you treat it. It will not provide satin dresses, six-button gloves, or opera-boxes to anything like a satisfactory extent; but it will furnish the means of supporting a snug little house in a county town, or even in one of the sea-bathing resorts. Here a Young Widow may be inclined to ask herself what place of residence she would do best to choose, admitting the secret ambition of her life to be a second marriage.

In the first place, it must be laid down as a rule that small country towns are not desirable, as the matrimonial competition in them is too keen. Pushing young men flock to the large cities; and in such sleepy places as Dulton—to name a type—the number of marriageable men is sure to be small, while the candidates for their hands will consist as usual of a great number of eager young ladies, from the miss of seventeen to the spinster of forty. Now the

arrival of a Young Widow like our friend Mrs. Lightfoot—in that photograph of a dark-eyed belle you see the lady in question—



MRS. LIGHTFOOT.

among this tribe of competitors cannot but provoke strife, more especially as she starts for the matrimonial stakes with all kinds of odds in her favour, or at least apparently so. She can go about without a chaperon, invite people to her house, dress stylishly, and can even make advances.

Being witty and liberal in the matter of tea-giving, she soon gets a little set round her, and finds some ardent worshippers even among the girls she is cutting out. For a girl, the friendship of a young married woman is much like what the friendship of a sixth-form boy at school is to a junior. Girls make of marriage their chief conversation; and to get nuptial mysteries and trials at first



THE CHARGE OF THE FAIR BRIGADE.

hand from one who has been initiated, instead of seeking for them in novels, is most delightful. But while the new arrival has many friends she has still more enemies, and these, with their sharp active tongues, are never long in tearing her reputation to shreds.

That is why so few Young Widows ever pick up husbands in small towns. They may be popular with the men, but the men are afraid of them. Ugly stories have been set going. Mothers, sisters, and cousins join in declaring that Mrs. Lightfoot is a flirt and a jilt, who, as they know for certain, has something shady in her antecedents. Some affirm that she was never married at all. Mrs. Lightfoot may put a good face upon these stories, if the rumour of them reaches her; but plenty of the things said against her will not reach her ears at all, and she will exhaust her patience in trying to understand why Mr. This and Mr. That, who are so amiable to her at times in public places, shrink up into unaccountable reserve when she endeavours to tackle them alone.

A danger then arises lest the widow should go too far in seeking to bring about an explanation with one of the gentlemen above named. If she do this, her hopes will be ruined beyond repair. Mr. This may be a facetious person, fond of flattery and flirting, but he has a whole array of female kinsfolk to reckon with; while Mr. That, though independent and in easy circumstances, may possibly be of jealous mood, and not at all disposed to see the spectre of the late Mr. Lightfoot, or of some other man, stand for ever between him and the widow if she becomes his wife. In most country towns one meets with widows like Mrs. Lightfoot who were pretty once, and whose hopes flew high, but who, though Time may have grayed their hair, are able to say conscientiously that they never, at any time, got a fair opportunity of being remarried. Admirers they have had in plenty, but of serious suitors none.

The Young Widow who sets up in a fashionable watering-place is likely to be more fortunate. Here, at least, she will get opportunities; and her chief peril will lie in the temptation to refuse the first good offers that come in the expectation of getting better ones by-and-by. During the bathing season, the pretty widow who comes down every day to the beach or the pier with a striking costume is sure to attract attention. She will be followed to her residence, and inquiries will be discreetly made about her. If she be staying in an hotel, so much the better. Her acquaintance may be cultivated at the *table-d'hôte*. It will then be ascertained that

she has a child of four, who is staying with its aunt; that she is related to a baronet; and that she delights in picnics. After dinner she will retire to the hotel drawing-room with a very cheerful old lady, who is on terms of familiar endearment with her, as it seems, and who adores picnics too.

Here the acquaintance of the pair may be followed up, and plans for an outing devised. The widow will of course not be too coy. She will only stipulate that her dear friend, the old lady, may come with her. This old lady enacts the part of duenna rather than of chaperon. She is careful about the Young Widow's health, chides her for exposing herself to draughts, entreats her to wrap herself up warmly, and urges her to drink two or three glasses of sherry at dinner because the doctor ordered it. But she has a happy knack of going to sleep when she perceives her *protégée* to be flirting; though by cleverly opening one eye now and then she keeps the suitor on the *qui-vive* of peril, and induces him to throw at once more warmth and more purport into his whispered declarations.

The Young Widow who has been cutting a gay figure for a fortnight at the seaside will have the satisfaction of hearing herself talked about in divers keys. But at the seaside this does not matter. The briny breezes infuse a tonic of good-natured indulgence into persons who are elsewhere captious critics; and then, as the colony of visitors is continually being transformed by fresh arrivals and departures, scandal has not time to shape itself into anything like a settled public opinion. Moreover at the seaside a Young Widow will be confronted by rivals of her own status. Perhaps there will be as many as half-a-dozen young widows, all staying at the same big hotel, all having children of four, all related to baronets, and all loving picnics. The scandal launched by match-making mammas and neglected ugly virgins cannot taboo the whole of them; and being powerless against them in the concrete may perhaps do no harm to any one of them individually.

But where many widows are flourishing together the expenses of showing off to the best advantage naturally fall heavy. Our friend Mrs. Lightfoot may have set off for Flirton-on-the-Sea, resolving not to spend more than fifty pounds on her month's trip; but soon the necessity of having one dress more than she had reckoned on becomes demonstrated to her. There is a Mrs. Quickfoot, who is 'making the running,' and establishing herself

as first favourite, by sporting a costume peculiarly novel and becoming. Mrs. Q. must be cut out, unless Mrs. L.'s trip is to result in ignominious failure.

But then comes Mrs. Smartfoot, who takes horse-exercise daily on the parade, and draws all the men after her. Her riding, her habits, the bunches of carnation which she wears on her bosom, the gold knob of her riding-whip, all become the talk of the place.



MRS. SMARTFOOT.

Mrs. Lightfoot and Mrs. Quickfoot thereupon fall too calculating as to whether *they* can afford a horse apiece, only just for a fortnight. Of course they do not communicate their cogitations to each other, though they may be very good friends; but each in secret orders a riding-habit, hires a hack, and makes arrangements



MRS LIGHTFOOT.

with the florist, the one for a bunch of moss-roses every day, the other for pansies.

One bright morning Mrs. L. takes the parade by surprise, by appearing on a beautiful chestnut, which makes Mrs. Q., whose equipments are not quite ready, bite her lips with dismay. But two days later Mrs. Q. herself shows up on a lovely white mare, with a long swishy tail. Then there are three well-mounted widows dividing the public homage; and it is odds but that one of the three, if not the two others, is successful in bringing down a husband.

It is a question whether a Young Widow who has but 300*l.* a year had not better, at the outset, convert this income into what



capital it will fetch, and lead a merry life so long as the money lasts. The more prudent course of living on the 300*l.* a year has its merits, but also its objections. Men are often caught by spangles. A woman who has money is like a jewel well set. She can surround herself with all the elegances requisite to show her off to the best advantage. She can afford to look as if she despised money, and by such means is the more likely to catch a moneyed man. The grasping women of novels, who set their caps at millionaires, would not succeed in real life if they showed such ardour in the pursuit. Gold often runs to gold, or to simili-gold, like steel to the magnet.

The Young Widows who do not try small towns or watering-places often make the mistake of going abroad, hoping to effect a settlement there. They underrate the prejudice which exists in foreign minds against the English, first, on account of religious differences, and next, owing to the fact that few English people who go to settle abroad are exempt from some little blot in their antecedents. It has passed into a saying among foreigners in many places, that if you make the acquaintance of an English family you are sure to hear something against them after awhile from other English.

Besides, as regards marriage, foreigners take such positive views that a Young Widow of sentimental instincts would soon be shocked by the mercenary spirit in which a foreigner proposing for her hand would treat the preliminaries of matrimony. If she had 300*l.* a year he would make the frankest inquiries how this sum was settled on her, and break off without scruple if he found that the settlement was too tightly drawn up.

On the whole a Young Widow had best stick to England, and if she have not the nerve for putting her fate to the touch in a sea-bathing town, she will find her best opportunities for advancement in one of the large cities. In London, if she takes to theatre-going, walks at the Zoo, and rides in Rotten Row, she will doubtless ensnare, before long, the heart of some well-to-do old quidnunc,



who, having nothing to do, spends most of his time on the prowl for pretty faces. There are plenty of such in all big cities; but the Young Widow who has urgent reasons for wishing to remarry fast had better not be too particular when she makes her choice among them. They are all much of a muchness, so she might safely act on the principle of first come first served.

Lastly, there is a very Gay Young Widow indeed, who is more often to be found on the Continent, particularly in Italy, than in England, though specimens have been seen amongst us. Sometimes she has money, and no care for her reputation, which she does not

think worth preserving ; sometimes she is poor, and considers other things more pleasing than reputation. In either case she leads the life of an immoderately gay man-about-town, and is a jolly fellow every inch of her. She has no squeamishness, and has been known to turn up under a strong escort in men's clothes at places where ladies are not admitted.

When she is rich a succession of nice young men appear at her entertainments, and, after holding the mastership of her household in turns, disappear into chaos to give place to a new company. She takes life as it comes, and having a sincere love for all kinds of pleasure denies herself nothing she fancies. On the whole, her friends are more favoured than her lovers, and she seems prouder of them. She is extremely good-natured to everybody, treating men as comrades and boon companions upon perfectly equal terms. She is a charming hostess, and can talk of politics, art, and literature with that fresh personal knowledge of things and people which is always attractive. She bestows her favours on any suitor who is importunate, when occasion serves, or when she is in the humour for flirtation, just as she would perform any other neighbourly act of no consequence. She thinks no more of making an assignation in her boudoir by moonlight than of giving an invitation to dinner.

She has forgotten at least half her lovers ; but she cannot be called false, because she does not pretend to be true. She had, perhaps, a great love in her heart once upon a time, and it was betrayed. Now she professes a code of ethics in love-affairs, where the heart is left out. Her house is a splendid bachelor lounge. Music and feasting and impromptu dances are always going on in different corners of it, and it is furnished with marvellous taste in art. She is generally surrounded, too, by a bevy of pretty women, who are either poor relations who live upon her, or minor satellites who move around her, and form her court. She is charitable, generous, serviceable, and very influential too in her careless capricious way, pulling strings when she pleases that move famous puppets one would not suspect of being under her thumb. She gives away a large share of her income in charity, and, being of a quick enthusiastic temper, will probably enter a convent when life's banquet palls upon her.

The poor Young Widow of the same type is oftenest a pretty wayward woman with an envious undisciplined mind, driven half

mad by circumstances with which she had not patience to deal, and therefore deemed hopeless. She first runs away with a hobbledehoy from Oxford, and is then heard of in company with Lord Tantivy and a four-in-hand. Generally she settles in Paris during the season, and becomes familiar with grand-dukes, petty dukes, counts, and princes without number. Now and then she even condescends



to a banker-baron or an American mine-owner. It is dangerous to offend her, for she lives high and shrinks from no sort of scandal. She has been known to horsewhip a clergyman in the Rue de la Paix at five o'clock on a spring afternoon, and in any discussion she will have her way or make creation scream. Sometimes she amasses a fortune, and ends her life as Lady Bountiful, with a château in Normandy or a villa at Cannes, having been prudent with her gains. Sometimes, when her game is quite over, she drowns herself in the Seine on a wintry night when the east wind is blowing.

IV.

YOUNG WIDOWS OF GOOD ESTATE.

To be the widow of an old man, to be twenty-five years of age, and possessed of a large estate, like the lady whose portrait comes next in our album, is to occupy an enviable position. M. Scribe, the French playwright, was fond of choosing ladies of this kind



for his heroines, and he always rewarded their virtues in the last acts of his comedies by wedding them to tenderly attached lovers who had been wooing them without any interested motives. M. Scribe, however, as a Frenchman, took business-like views of matrimony, and he never went so far as to depict his heroes as being insensible to the attractions of widows' fortunes. Love may have been the first consideration in their eyes, but interest ran a good second; and, indeed, as most of these heroes were men devoid of worldly means, they could not have afforded to fall in love with women as poorly circumstanced as themselves.

There is a good deal to be said on the subject of mercenariness in courting rich widows. A rich man who falls in love with a penniless girl takes a greater pride in endowing her with his riches than he would in marrying a girl who was rich too; and this is the case also with women. As women are essentially creatures of impulse, governed by the heart more than by the head, they cannot fall in love without instantly burning to make sacrifices for the objects of their affections. The very fact of their being rich, whilst their lovers are poor, is a reversal of the usual order of things, and lends a piquancy to their love-affairs which they find far from displeasing. When a rich widow can take a penniless

young man whom she loves, and endow him with all her wealth, her sensations for awhile 'touch heaven.'

Thus it is that we have seen in London, within a period of not many years, a millionaire banker's heiress shower her gold upon an impecunious colonel; the wealthiest of our peeresses wed with an American adventurer; a widowed duchess marry a briefless barrister; and another widowed duchess confer her hand and fortune upon a third-rate tenor who used to sing at concerts. In all of these cases, however, the love was really reciprocal. In the case of the colonel, there was a doubt for some time as to whether this gallant officer would consent to give his name in exchange for a fortune. He thought the bargain had a taint of dishonour upon it; and he had to be coaxed and almost implored before he would agree to a marriage which any continental colonel would have jumped at. It has not transpired whether the briefless barrister and the tenor were equally difficult with their respective duchesses.

Rich women, even more than rich men, have the fancy to be loved for themselves and not for their wealth. And this makes them shrewd in a general way, though not always in particular instances. They are too mistrustful sometimes, and not enough so at others. They mistrust sincerity most, and are least on their guard against flattery.

Once a woman falls in love, it is seldom that anything she may hear against the character of her lover makes her deviate from her purpose of marrying him. She will close her ears against the remonstrances of her most tried friends. She will defy the whole world, and esteem herself happy at being able to make such a sacrifice for the adored one—who is often but a mere puppy, lovable in no one's eyes but her own.

It says little for women's discrimination in love-affairs, that when holding royal rank they almost invariably choose their favourites ill. Elizabeth of England, Catherine II. of Russia, Queen Christine of Spain, and her daughter Isabella are instances in point. All these ladies had circles of great, brave, and witty men to choose from; but they selected dunderheads to rule over them. So there was not much truth in the saying of that political paradoxist who declared that it was better for a country to have a queen than a king as its nominal head, seeing that when a king held the sceptre, he let himself be guided by women; whereas a queen put herself under the guidance of men. The saw would

only have been a wise one if queens were accustomed to choose their lovers well.

The chances are altogether against a rich Young Widow making a happy second marriage. Life is such a grim struggle with most men, that the opportunity of gaining fortune at one stroke by a marriage tempts adventurers of all ranks to woo the hand of the lovely millionaire. The peer's scapegrace younger son, who gets as deeply into debt as he can on a meagre allowance; the retired major vegetating on half-pay, and eking out his income by turf speculation or games of hazard; the smooth-tongued purring parson hungering after a rich living, are among the first suitors who are sure to offer themselves. The parson is a particularly dangerous suitor, but not with ladies of title. Widowed peeresses seldom feel inclined to sink into the position of rectors' wives, even though they may have the prospect of getting their husbands transformed into canons, and, possibly, into bishops. But the widows of brewers, merchants, bankers, and of men who have been mixed up with trade are generally very susceptible to the influence of the cloth.

A parson seems such a safe person to marry, and the connection is obviously so respectable! No stories of past scandals to be feared; few debts (for the clergy are never trusted overmuch by their purveyors); and then the quasi-certainty of good behaviour in the future. Poor parsons are sometimes raffish, but rich ones never. Wealth develops in them an easy dignity and a great desire for rest. They are precluded from going on to the turf; they cannot fritter thousands away in striving after parliamentary honours; the only passions they can indulge are such as it requires but little money to satisfy.

Occasionally, though, an enriched parson will set about building a fine church, and this, no doubt, is a costly whim; but it has its compensations, not the least of which is that it furnishes the parson with the opportunity for paying a graceful compliment to his wife by having her painted in the guise of a saint, and put into a stained-glass window, whereon her benefactions as 'foundress of the fane' will be set forth in Gothic letters on scroll-work.

With a retired officer a Young Widow can get none of the guarantees as to past or future good conduct which parsons afford. The retired major may be as brave as steel, and socially speaking the jolliest of dogs; but it is pretty certain that at one time or



other he will have led a gay life. Besides which, his habit of commanding will have endued him with an imperiousness of mind which will bode ill for domestic peace if the woman whom he courts happens to have a bit of a temper.

The major who has debts is likely to prove a greater tartar than the one who has none. Once his creditors have been appeased, his umbrageous dignity will be continually on the look-out for allusions on the part of his wife to the money which she has expended on him. He will early lay himself out to prove to her that in their marriage the condescension was all on his side, and the favour received on hers. He will brag about his military rank, his campaigns, and his wounds. He will cause a portrait of himself to be painted with his uniform on, and all his medals on his breast. Perhaps, with a part of his wife's money, he will purchase interest to obtain a Government appointment, and insist that the post in question was bestowed upon him for his sole unaided merit.

Some officers in this case have been known to purchase foreign titles and decorations, which enable them to crow about having brought honour and glory as a makeweight to their wives' dowers. A man who had married a rich wife, and who happened to be a very clever and good fellow, remarked one day before company that it was absurd of him to have said at the marriage service, 'With all my worldly goods I thee endow,' seeing that he had no worldly goods to give. 'O yes, my love, you forget your talents!' exclaimed his admiring wife. 'H'm, I didn't endow you with those,' was the retort, more funny than polite.

Besides the peer's scapegrace younger son, the half-pay officer with much time on his hands, and the purring parson, there are other fortune-hunters of a more experienced and wily sort. There is the political adventurer of fair social standing, who wants to marry money, and have his election expenses regularly paid. The game for which he seeks most keenly is a well-endowed widow, for she has commonly her property at her own disposal; and did not a lady of this description not long ago make a Premier and a peer of her fortunate husband? The gates of office in England only open to a golden key; and never was better advice given to a young Briton than that which warned him 'to get rich before he became ambitious.' Even George Canning's marriage was at least half the secret of his success. Canning the clever anonymous writer, and Canning with 5000*l.* a year and a duke for a brother-in-law, were two very different persons in the eyes of his contemporaries. There has been no instance of a poor man holding any of the great offices of state in our time, save as a

mere dummy and nominee of an imperious master, unless indeed he was a peer. No wonder, therefore, that our 'coming men' are so keen-scented and long-winded when pursuing widows of good estate, whether young or old.

Another type of fortune-hunter is the almost bankrupt merchant or manufacturer, who is in want of a round sum in cash to tide him over the critical moment in speculations that have gone wrong; there is also the sanctified plutocrat, always on the look-out for an increase to his wealth and position; and then there is the 'squire of high degree,' whose estate is heavily mortgaged. But the most impudent persecutors of widows will perhaps be found in the speculative fraternity, who want to lease theatres, start newspapers, keep racing-studs, or operate on the Stock Exchange. The widow of a demi-millionaire proprietor of an important journal, and who had a clear income of 25,000*l.* a year, was literally driven away from home by the annoyance she suffered from these gentry. Each wanted to edit the journal after his own idea, but, above all, to secure the fine fortune in the possession of a lady who was not a whit too shrewd.

It is rather sad that widows who have lived most wretchedly with their first husbands, and who want to remarry with a view to tasting a little bliss at last, should so often be disappointed. The memory of past sorrows so quickly vanishes when restful days have come, that a widow who has been enjoying her liberty for about a year gets to fancy that she was not so miserable after all. Naturally, however, she will look, in her next love-affair, for qualities quite the opposite of those possessed by her dear departed. Novelty is always pleasing, but never more so than when it promises a change from worse to better.

The Young Widow who has been unhappy with a merchant will be inclined to see of what stuff soldiers are made; while the one who has groaned under the despotism of a military martinet will feel attracted towards the clergy. In these vagaries, however, resides the danger already alluded to of choosing hastily, and consequently with unwisdom. It has passed into a proverb that widows, to be won, must be wooed quickly, *à la hussarde*, as our French neighbours say. This surely indicates that many widows take less precautions in choosing a second husband than in engaging a servant.

Yet some rich widows remain in single blessedness for years, and appear to enjoy their liberty intensely. When advised to marry,

they answer laughingly that they never will; that they have had taste enough of matrimony, and are not anxious to try it again. These widows, who learn to manage their own affairs and become keen women of business, appear to the faint-hearted lover as quite impregnable; and so they are for a time, until the inevitable weariness of things present and the desire for change steal over them of a sudden, and make them dismantle all their fortifications, as it were. Then they capitulate, to everybody's astonishment, at the first spirited assault.

The rich widow who never remarries is not a rare type at all; but the *young* and rich one is. Of young and rich widows it may be said that they have equal temptations to remarry, whether they have been happy or the reverse in their first ventures. If happy, they want to taste felicity over again; if they have been unlucky, they are pardonably curious to try one more chance in the matrimonial speculation, which is indeed a lottery.

V.

YOUNG WIDOWS WHO TAKE BOARDERS.

WE were much astonished, a little while ago, to meet at Cheltenham with a lady whom we had known in first-rate social position, and who had recommenced life anew as a lodging-house keeper; and shortly afterwards—so do travellers often flush surprises in coveys—we fell in with one similarly circumstanced, who had opened a boarding-house in Paris for tourists. Here are portraits of the pair of them. One has a fair child-like face; the other is dark and voluptuous in appearance.

The lady who had remained faithful to her native soil was, though young and winsome, the mother of four children; and this accounts for her difficulty in finding a second mate. Her husband had enjoyed a handsome income, but, coming from a salary, it terminated with his death; and as he had neither laid a sixpence aside nor insured his life, his widow remained without so much as would suffice to pay her tradesmen's bills. This is no uncommon occurrence among those who live sumptuously because their position seems to demand ostentation, and who postpone economy to more

prosperous times; just as if they had the gift of prescience and could depend on it to-morrow.

Mrs. Crowe at first essayed to live by giving lessons; but the acquirements she had retained from her education at a fashionable young ladies' school proved insufficient in these days of high-standard certificated governesses. Next she tried to win bread by authorship; but editors would not insert her prose nor publishers accept her novels. When she had reached the verge of destitution, one of her husband's relatives took pity upon her, bought her the long lease of a house in the western watering-place; then, having added a sufficient sum to buy furniture, linen, and electro-plate, wished her God-speed.

Mrs. Crowe's unimpeachable respectability and lady-like manners soon procured her lodgers of the best sort. She received two old spinster sisters of property, a hectic clergyman, and a general who had caught a touch of liver complaint in the Barbadoes. Connoisseurs of feminine nature need hardly be told that she lost little time in setting her widow's-cap demurely at this general.



The sly old dog quickly seemed to guess at the impression he had made, and our private opinion is that he harboured designs which had nothing to do with matrimony. However that may be, he was liberal in giving sixpences to the widow's boys and in buying sugarplums for the girls; moreover, he was a frequent guest at Mrs. Crowe's tea-table, where, let us hope, it was truly the humour of his oft-told anecdotes, and no other secret consideration, which induced her to laugh in a manner so gratifying to his self-esteem. Truth to say, it is often a grim business, this husband-hunting by widows who have children. General Kite was a yellow-faced wicked-eyed old hunk, never very abstemious over the bottle, and crusty as a bear when his liver-twinges tormented him; but he had a thousand a

year from the Funds, besides his half-pay, and poor Mrs. Crowe was terribly anxious that her two boys should be sent to a good school.



A YOUNG WIDOW WHO TAKES BOARDERS.

That so pretty and sensible a woman as she was should ever have thought of marrying General Kite, if she had had no children to care for, is most unlikely; she would really and truly rather have earned a shilling a day by needlework than think of such a thing. But for her boys' and girls' sake she would have accepted a veteran with two wooden legs and a cork arm, provided that in the fleshly hand that remained to him this living wreck could show a cheque-book. There may be a repulsive aspect in these motherly sacrifices; but is not the feeling which dictates them genuinely pathetic?

We are sorry to be obliged to add that Mrs. Crowe did not succeed in entrapping her general. When that warrior had been repulsed in his illicit campaign—that which had not matrimony for its object—he took to growling loud complaints about his mulligatawny. Next he missed a bottle of his chutnee sauce, and accused the housemaid. He stamped about the house, and swore such things regarding the attendance, the cooking, un-



GENERAL KITE AND THE HECTIC CLERGYMAN.

aired sheets, and iron-moulded linen—topics he had never mentioned before—that he fairly frightened the two elderly sisters; and, not content with this, he strode off to the Cheltenham Club, and blustered his belief that Widow Crowe was ‘a minx, sir,’ who robbed and worried mankind, and was always trying to swindle money out of her lodgers for those beggarly brats of hers.

His unchivalrous proceedings went so far that Mrs. Crowe was obliged, at last, with tears in her eyes, but dignity on her face, to request that he would look for other lodgings, which he did forthwith; and perhaps he would have damaged the poor widow in her good fame and means of livelihood, had not the hectic clergyman mildly, but very bravely, taken her part. He was an excellent fellow, this clergyman, and, perhaps, would have married the widow herself, if his days had not been numbered by consumption.

Did Mrs. Crowe find another well-to-do suitor to replace the gallant General Kite, or did she derive prudence from her first sharp lesson, and resign herself to an eternity of widow’s weeds? Well, she is young still, and possibly has not yet played all her trumps. So long as her boys are not out of knickerbockers nor her girls in their teens there are still chances ahead. We knew of a widow of forty-three who threw down her ace of hearts, and actually took a king with it.

Our next widow, the lady who emigrated to Paris, did better for herself than Mrs. Crowe; for she had a quick scheming nature, and developed in adversity a talent for business which one would never have suspected in the days when she was the admired hostess of one of the nicest drawing-rooms in Kensington Palace Gardens. As marriage has been called the career of women, so is widowhood a kind of profession; and there are many who know how to make it lucrative.

Mrs. Lovelace had fallen from yet more exalted rank and wealth than Mrs. Crowe; but, to do her justice, she never endeavoured to earn so much as a penny roll by teaching or driving a quill. She went in for a situation as lady-housekeeper and reader to a dilapidated peer, who wanted some one to manage his servants and entertain him with French novels of an evening; and she discharged these honourable duties to perfection, even contriving to incite his lordship against all his relatives, so that they might be ordered out of his house, leaving him and her to enjoy each other’s society quite comfortable. After a while the old peer died, and left his friend a round legacy. There was some talk of a suit at law for



THE ADMIRER HOSTESS.

undue influence, but nothing came of it; and Mrs. Lovelace, money in hand, started for Paris, where she embarked her capital in a private hotel, which was frequented chiefly by Americans.

It was the oddest boarding-house in the world. The mistress of it, not content with housing and feeding her lodgers, showed them the sights of the French capital from a barouche, with liveried coachman and footman on the box. She also took them to boxes at the Opera, for which they paid. There were champagne and truffles on the table at every meal, and all the gentlemen present treated her on a footing of affectionate familiarity, as if they were her cousins. Yet there was never any card-playing in the house—at least not for high stakes—and no perceptible impropriety.

Mrs. Lovelace stated in her prospectus that it was her main object to provide wealthy strangers with all the advantages of a luxurious and pleasant home during their sojourn in Paris; and

READER TO A DILAPIDATED PEER. ¹

she kept a well-dressed polyglot tout, who used to carry these prospectuses, enclosed in pink envelopes, prettily sealed, to rich Americans on the day after their arrival at the Grand Hôtel and the Hôtel du Louvre. It is supposed that she took many a valuable customer from these two houses by this method; one fact at least is certain, that strangers who entered her hotel were in no hurry to leave it, though the cost of living therein was not such as would commend it to tourists of the Cook's-excursionist class. When we

met Mrs. Lovelace in the Bois de Boulogne she told us, with a business-like smile, which became her wondrously, that she was earning about 4000*l.* a year.

But this engaging lady had yet another string to her bow; and one evening, over a cup of caravan tea in her Japanese boudoir, she confessed to us that she had instructed the famous matrimonial agent, M. Foy, to find her a second suitable husband. Now this M. Foy is not an agent after the manner which the uneducated vulgar may suppose. He carries on his business like a man who feels the responsibilities of his mission: he is discreet, full of tact, and charges high. There are hundreds, nay thousands, of couples enjoying connubial bliss at this hour, both in France and elsewhere, who were brought together by M. Foy's good offices, without their having the slightest suspicion of the fact.

Their affairs were managed for them by match-making mammas and family solicitors, who know that M. Foy is just the man to appeal to when a young lady or gentleman, for some reason or another, is difficult to dispose of. M. Foy is never so ill-advised as to let his interference appear ostensibly in a negotiation. He presents a father or mother to somebody who, maybe, knows somebody else, who is acquainted with a well-to-do aunt having a niece to marry; and the aunt, no more than the niece, will have any idea to her dying day that the arch-hymeneal plotter had thrown out his feelers in her direction. All this is managed by the instrumentality of numerous non-professional sub-agents, who are paid 'by the piece,' and have often but an ephemeral connection with M. Foy. Any one can become a sub-agent of this sort by simply going to M. Foy with the announcement that he or she knows of a marriageable person, and volunteering the necessary introduction. M. Foy divides the commission-money with them, and nobody is any the wiser.

It speaks well for M. Foy's integrity—as he takes care to remark modestly, but feelingly, in his prospectuses—that among the persons who have favoured him with their assistance may be reckoned ladies and gentlemen from the highest social rank and the most eminent degrees of celebrity in art, letters, science, and the liberal professions. This is simple enough; for as every Frenchman looks upon marriage as a business, nobody is ashamed to turn an honest penny by aiding in the marriage of his friends or of passing strangers.

So, then, Mrs. Lovelace had put her hand into the keeping of the discreet M. Foy, who had promised to put her in the way of an



active middle-aged French judge, who wanted to have a comfortable home. This dignitary was too much engrossed by his business



CONFIDENCES OVER A CUP OF CARAVAN TEA.

to go a-wooing, and he was bashful into the bargain; but he had an uncle who was bent on drawing him from his single blessedness, and it was through this gentleman that Mrs. Lovelace was to be introduced to the judge, who was as yet in ignorance of the bliss in store for him.

Mrs. Lovelace avowed that she had cast her lines for a Frenchman, because English people have a prejudice against boarding-house widows (and against old gentlemen's lady-housekeepers, she might have added); but Frenchmen hold by the liberal doctrine that 'money always smells good;' besides which, she would, of course, save appearances by giving up her establishment some months before the wedding. Mrs. Lovelace's name had never been positively tainted by scandal. She had laid by a good deal of money; she spoke French to perfection; and solicited our candid opinion as to whether she were not the kind of woman who could make a middle-aged and bashful French judge happy.

We raised our eyes and gazed at a lady splendidly attired in black velvet and lace, with a pearl necklace and several massive bracelets of diamonds and rubies. She had arms of sculptural mould, rich clustering black hair, whose raven glint was set off by a scarlet rose, deep eyes of velvet lustre, and lips that could be very eloquent without speaking. Withal Mrs. Lovelace bore herself with the mien of a woman who is accustomed to see mankind at her feet, and had a general air of being able to do battle for herself, which augured vastly well for the quietude of the French judicial luminary. No doubt he will be a happy man.

There remains to be described the clergyman's widow: and here is a portrait of an unpretending little body which I find on a flyleaf of my album, not very well knowing how it got there. She is a young woman whom her husband's death has not left destitute, but whose income is nevertheless insufficient to maintain her in the position which she occupied whilst her dear departed was alive.

Perhaps she has 200*l.* a year, and a child to support. She is clever at economising, and can live within her income, but not on the same scale as a French widow, who would dress handsomely on 200*l.* a year and save besides. To an English gentlewoman the above revenue is but a wretched pittance, and the widow's first care is to look about for a cheap lodging of some pretensions, situate in a town where genteel society is forthcoming. Cheltenham, Leamington, and Malvern are likely to suit her. She avoids boarding-

houses at first, as likely to bring her into raffish company, and chooses rather the house of some highly respectable person, a widow, like herself, who will be looked upon by the world as a model duenna. By-and-by she begins to find the superintendence of this duenna tiresome. The highly respectable widow spies upon her, favours her with 'motherly' advice in an acid tone, and eventually gives her warning, because this advice is resented in a manner not too filial. The Young Widow's second experiment in lodgings is made under a roof the landlady of which looks like a person who will leave her free to act as she pleases; and it must



be admitted that this precious liberty is, for a long time, not abused.

The clergyman's widow lays herself out to catch a second clergyman. She courts the society of an unmarried vicar, and goes great lengths with him; then when this paragon slips from her, owing to a too great show of anxiety on her part to land him, she sets her lines for curates, and soon has one or two of these pious fish nibbling at the 200*l.* a year which she has to offer. If she would like to accept a bald divine of fifty, who has a greasy coat-collar and gives lessons at a shilling the hour, or a half-famished deacon, who has never been able to pass his examination for priest's orders, or a whisky-smelling priest, who held a living once, but had to resign it for reasons not satisfactorily explained, she would only have to pick and choose.

She has also very good chances with a sharp-nosed Master of Arts, who writes for the press, and would like to start a new clerical journal of his own. He frequently calls upon her and hints that 4000*l.* (the capital of 200*l.* a year) launched in a journalistic enterprise would bring in 500*l.* a year at least, and perhaps four times that, for there is no limit to the revenue of a successful paper. Another curate comes nearer the mark in remarking that 3000*l.* only might purchase an immediate presentation to a living worth 600*l.* a year. But the widow prefers not to part with any of her money, the importance of which gets enhanced in her eyes by the cunning attempts made to secure portions of it.

If she fell really in love she would of course not object to buy a living for the man of her choice, since cures of souls can still be bought like profane merchandise; but it so happens that none of the holy men who angle for the widow's money throw out any bait to her heart. Her dream was to find an amiable young rector, or an equally amiable young curate, who should woo her, firstly, owing to her charms, and secondly, owing to that great experience in parish work of which she is never weary of boasting. She privately thinks that she ought really to be considered a great prize by any clergyman about to commence his career. If she dared, she would advertise in the papers:

'A young and musical Widow, having a considerable knowledge of Church matters, and who would be found an invaluable help to any clergyman newly beneficed, wishes,' &c.

The clergyman's widow ends by renouncing her ecclesiastical

hopes. It is so rare as to be a phenomenal occurrence when one of this sort remarries into the Church. Generally she lapses into the 'boarding-house widow,' or when the education of her child begins to make a serious hole in her modest income, she will perhaps take boarders herself. In either case she is prone to set her cap at



middle-aged annuitants with a tendency to gout. Having discovered that her child is an awkward bar to her marrying a young man, she has trained it to pretty manners, in the hope, based on motherly pride, that childless elderly gentlemen will think as well

of it as she does. If the child be a girl the chances are in her favour; for old gentlemen like to be petted by young girls, and have sometimes no objection to step into the possession of a family ready made.

After all there are no great risks to run with girls. They help their mothers to make the house comfortable, they do not usually get into scrapes or debts, and, with a very moderate amount of fondling on the part of their fathers-in-law, they become attached and agreeable. But a boy is a different creature; and it requires a very dull old gentleman indeed not to see that the fair-spoken curly-headed urchin of to-day may become the rip, rake, or spend-thrift of ten years hence. If an old gentleman has a little property of his own, he is extra cautious not to embark it in a matrimonial speculation which may involve him in the payment of 'ticks' for youthful dissipations which he cannot share.

Many a widow owes her inability to find a second settlement to the possession of a son; and the more she dotes upon that son the less likely she is to find favour in the sight of ripe old suitors, whose affection is selfish, with a tendency to be jealous even of cats or dogs who divert the least part of the exclusive attention which they claim as their due. Some widows have tried the plan of sending a small son to school, and saying nothing about him till the elderly wooer has got so far into the toils as to be unable to withdraw. This is not a bad device if skilfully conducted, and it has often led a widow to secure both a wealthy second husband for herself and an accommodating second father for her boy.

VI.

WIDOWS WHO WANT SITUATIONS.

AMONG some papers which came into my hands as executor to a Mr. Lackaday I found the portrait of a resolute-looking lady, and the following extract from a daily paper:

'LADY HOUSEKEEPER, or Companion to a Single Gentleman or Widower.—A young Widow Lady, of refined tastes and manners, and cheerful disposition, is open to an engagement. Salary not so much an object as a comfortable home. The advertiser is thoroughly domesticated, and competent to take the entire

management of a gentleman's household. Speaks French, and is musical.—Address, Vidua,' &c.

Advertisements like the above are pretty frequently to be met with in English papers, and they are apt to fall under the eyes of larkly young men, who answer them. To prevent this kind of thing, the Viduas who advertise in American papers generally add, 'No triflers need apply;' but it is rather difficult to ascertain that a man is a trifler until he has declared himself. Cœlebs, who writes to Vidua from his London club, and makes an appointment near the 'Wild Ass Pound' at the Zoological Gardens, may go a long way in trifling before the lady discovers what he is about. For very shame's sake, if Vidua should turn out to be a nicely dressed well-looking woman of good manners, he will talk as if he meant business. He will allude to his house in the country, where the servants are all running riot for want of a mistress's control; he will ask Vidua's terms, and suggest that he is ready with references, as a hint to Vidua that she should say the same. If Vidua have her references too, Cœlebs is of course floored, and hastens to beat a retreat under cover of promising to write.

It often happens that a trifler, who has beguiled an advertising widow into a rendezvous, goes away with a flea in his ear, owing to the lady's extreme dignity. Widows are more than a match for young men. Should, however, Vidua be so foolish as to let herself be quite caught by Cœlebs' patter, inducing her to venture out of her reserve, and to make advances to him, a rude jest and laugh may not unlikely warn her all of a sudden that she has been duped.

There are others besides young men who answer advertisements like the foregoing, without serious, or at least proper, intent. These advertisements have a suggestiveness about them which titillates the nerves of sensuous but shy old gentlemen. The portly middle-aged widower again, a full-blooded man, with large red ears, is often caught by them. He is rather too old to remarry, yet he cannot get on without feminine society. His respectability prevents him from flirting; his morals—for perhaps he belongs to a straitlaced sect of Jumpers—withhold him from placing some pretty milliner under his protection. At the same time his sense of order, and his fondness for domestic comfort, make him indisposed to court the favours of his pretty housemaid.

He is almost sure to have a pretty housemaid, for men of this

stamp abhor ugly women ; but though her charms may have some effect upon him, causing him to ogle her curiously on the sly, he will not dare transgress the limits of decorum in his relations with her. Even when our friend answers the advertisement of Vidua, he will do so without any clear intention of embroiling himself in a dangerous connection. He will answer, because his instincts



impel him towards women, and because his fancy will paint Vidua as a fascinating lady in her prime, who will not be too coy if wooed, and who in any case may be agreeable to him of an even-

ing by playing the piano while he warbles snatches of operatic airs.

Our friend—let us call him Viduus—will doubtless open his fire upon Vidua in a heavy sort of way, by a letter in dignified language: ‘Mr. V. presents his compliments to Mrs. V.,’ &c., and he will ask for particulars. Vidua will reply with eight pages of close writing, furnishing much interesting rigmarole about her history and misfortunes, and will enclose a photograph. Being rather past thirty, she will send a highly finished vignette, executed



when she was twenty-four, and this will fetch Viduus to a certainty. An appointment will be made at the refreshment-room of the Ludgate-hill Station. Widowers like meetings at railway-stations, for they are the safest of trysting-places; and, besides, a refreshment-room offers opportunities for a little of that conviviality which breaks the ice of formalism.

But we may trust Viduus for being first at the rendezvous, and

for locating himself in such a way that he shall have a good long gaze at Vidua before she notices him, or suspects who he is. He has been careful in his letter to say nothing about his own personal appearance. He is to recognise Vidua by a cherry ribbon which she will wear in her bonnet. If, now, she proves an ugly person, faded, and evidently bent on concealing the number of her years under a layer of pearl-powder and rouge, Viduus will slink off, and write on the next day to say that unavoidable circumstances compelled him to alter his arrangements, so that he was unable to keep his appointment, and will not trouble Vidua any further, as he purposes leaving town.

But if Vidua's natural charms, or her pearl-powder and rouge, have made her sufficiently captivating to work upon the feelings of Viduus, the latter will accost her more or less shyly, and after a few commonplace remarks, suggest a luncheon in the dining-room hard by. One need not follow the couple further than this. Whether Viduus takes Vidua for his lady-housekeeper and companion, clings to her and eventually marries her, or whether he simply dallies with her for a few days, and then parts from her on discovering that he and she have an incompatibility of temper, are matters of but little interest as affecting Young Widows in general. Events necessarily differ according to particular cases, and widows who insert advertisements in the papers like the one we have quoted, no doubt occasionally succeed in landing substantial widowers in their nets.

Here is another form of advertisement, which occurs now and then, and deserves to be thoughtfully considered :

'A WIDOWER, having three daughters, aged from ten to sixteen, wishes to secure the services of a lady who is capable alike of managing a household, and of imparting instruction to three motherless girls.—Address Viduus, &c.

This is Viduus Number 2. He may be the same Viduus as the one already mentioned, who, having failed to arrange terms with Vidua, sees fit to recommence operations by inserting an advertisement on his own account. Anyhow, the man who launches such a general appeal to ladies out of work is either a very shy man or a disreputable one. He may be both. A widower in good circumstances, and enjoying a satisfactory character, may almost always find within his own circle of acquaintance some lady competent to discharge the duties above particularised. It is fair to add, how-

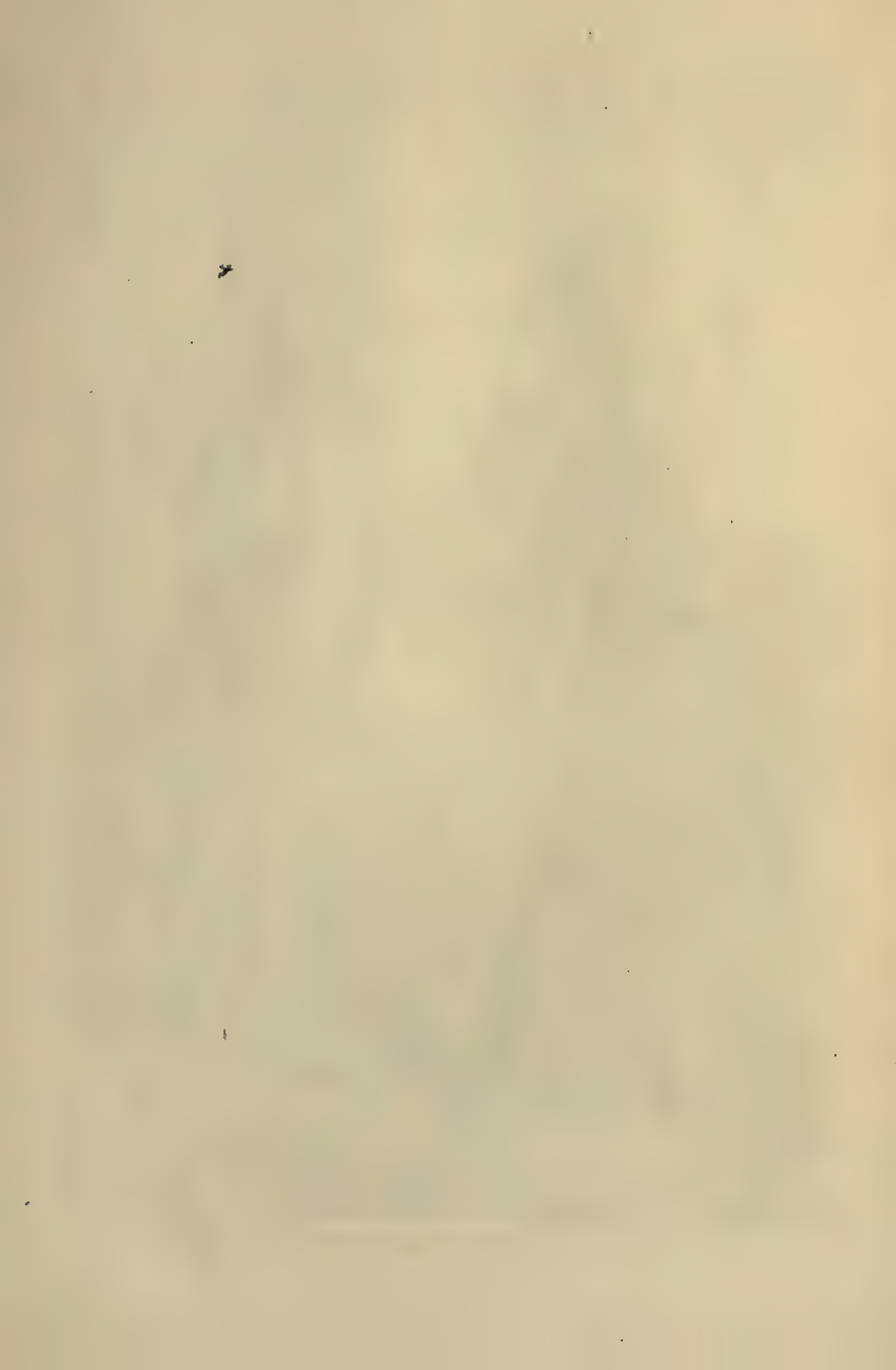
ever, that in the case of widowers who reside in the country this rule does not always hold good; for it often happens that in a country district there will be no eligible Viduas within beek of a Viduus.

The widower who lives in the country is often a man profoundly bored. Local politics, interests, and doings weary him. He has had a sickening surfeit of them. In his declining years he wants to be amused by a gay sprightly woman, who shall be able to talk with him about the great world of London, in which he has not moved for years, if ever he did move in it.

Such widowers are not particular. Vidua receives a letter with a country post-mark, sends her photograph, as per custom, and receives in return a post-office order sufficient to pay her expenses to Boreham Grange in Noshire. Down she goes, and finds a plump, but prematurely aged, individual, who has put on his best clothes and greatest dignity of manner to receive her. Vidua sees at a glance that she can hook this personage with a turn of her wrist. He is not likely to pay for a second post-office order to secure an interview with another widow. He wants to find a companion as easily as possible, and without any delay. He says timidly, when the interview has lasted about a quarter of an hour: 'You had better let my girls think that you and I are old friends. They do not know that I advertised.'

Vidua, if she remains with a Viduus of this sort, gets married pretty soon. The tattling tongues of country neighbours would not allow a widower to keep a lady-housekeeper long without carping on the subject. Generally, Viduus will find it convenient to pass off Vidua from the first as his cousin or sister-in-law, in order to give her the proper amount of authority over his girls; and then a marriage between him and her will take no one by surprise.

There is a sort of widow, too, who advertises occasionally, and chooses by preference the *Morning Post* as a medium of communication with the outside world. She is willing to undertake the duties of chaperon to girls who want introduction to good society, and under plausible language practically offers to sell presentations at Court and elsewhere for a substantial consideration. She is very precise on that point; and her advertisements always conclude with the assurance that she 'expects liberal terms.' This kind of advertiser is frequently the widow of an Irish peer's younger son, who has a preposterous idea of her own rank in life; or the relict of an Anglo-Indian officer, who is anxious to turn her old sweet-





A YOUNG WIDOW IN WANT OF A SITUATION.

"You had better let my girls think you and I are old friends."

hearts and acquaintance to account. Sometimes she can really perform her promise; but more often her proposal is merely that of a light-headed unprincipled woman at her wits' end to pay her debts, and ready to try the first scheme that presents itself to her flighty imagination.

Now let us turn to another class of advertisement:

'LADY-HELP.—A Widow, refined, musical, and a lady by birth, is willing, owing to reverses, to accept a situation as above.—Address,' &c.

Such announcements as this are mere fudge. Lady-helps have long ago been proved to be failures. They are neither ladies, nor helps, nor servants, nor companions. They are nothing.

The lady-help who gets accepted in a household on the strength of the qualities which she has attributed to herself in her own advertisement is mostly an incumbrance to the household which has consented to receive her services. She wears dainty caps, and walks into the kitchen with a cambric apron on, as if she were a high-priestess about to officiate. In rolling up her sleeves to knead the dough of a pudding, she is careful to remove a jewelled ring or two, in order to show that she has never been used to such work. The pudding which she makes is heavy and indigestible; but it has been compounded by a lady, and that may be some comfort to those who suffer from partaking of it.

Equally comfortable may it be to sleep in ill-made beds arranged by the lady-help, to sit in dusty apartments where the cobwebs have escaped her notice, and to drink lukewarm tea because this precious assistant does not know how to make water boil. The people who would employ a lady-help rather than an ordinary servant may be classed in two categories: they are either stingy folk who want to get out of a lady for poor pay, or no pay at all, the amount of work which could not be extracted from a servant; or they are persons of that semi-genteel kind who want a lady in their household in order to get from her some inkling as to the usages of polite society. In the former case the lady-help is to be pitied; in the latter she gets a very enviable berth, and speedily becomes mistress of the house where she is supposed to serve.

Lady-helps, however, are becoming rather scarce, and situations in this capacity are sought after rather by gushing and inexperienced girls than by ripe widows. Vidua flies at higher game. Self-depreciation is not one of her foibles, and she will never flaunt

her poverty to a greater extent than may be necessary to secure her the respectful sympathy of the elder widowers and bachelors to whom she applies for situations. Pity she does not want—she knows it is degrading to the recipient; but sympathetic admiration is another thing, for it may lead to marriage.

VII.

GREAT MEN'S YOUNG WIDOWS.

Two portraits in our collection represent women who were not young within living memory. They are photographs from famous pictures of Marie Louise of Austria, widow of Napoleon I., and of Caroline of Naples, who married the Duke de Berry, and was mother of the last of the French Bourbons, the yet living Count de Chambord. Both ladies are types of a class which must continue to excite interest so long as illustrious men will die, leaving young wives behind them.

Marie Louise had never been much attached to the magnificent adventurer, who blazed over startled Europe 'the comet of a season;' but when the great Emperor became the prisoner of St. Helena one might have thought that the young wife's bosom would have swelled with pride at wearing a title which every large-hearted woman in the world must have envied her. Love is not born at will; but any woman of common good feeling would try to bear with dignity the name of a hero. The daughter of the Hapsburgs and the descendant of Maria Theresa might have remembered that when she issued from Notre Dame in her bridal dress, she had been acclaimed by conquering legions who had made the proudest monarchs of Europe to tremble on their thrones; and if her heart was not with the victor of Austerlitz, she might have recollected, at least, that she was the mother of the King of Rome.

But Marie Louise had no care for dignities, and while the great Emperor was still alive she had already begun to dally with one Neipperg, a baron. He was a poor creature, with whiskers and a bald head; but she loved him in her fat German way, and the pair begot children. So soon as death had put Napoleon out of the way



MARIE LOUISE.

they married, and Marie Louise, to please Neipperg, surrendered even her title of Empress, and called herself Duchess of Parma. French tourists who wandered through the Parmesan Duchy in those days would come across a heavy landau, containing the whiskered Austrian, his plump spouse, and a row of brats nestling on the front seat; and it served them little to flush red at the thought that they had just seen the woman who, during Napoleon's last Russian and German campaigns, had been Empress and Regent of France.

Marie Louise had so thoroughly accustomed herself to her new

state of life that the merest allusion to Frenchmen made her fidget and yawn. She considered Neipperg a much finer fellow than her first husband, and had an Austrian regiment at her orders, which the mighty warrior reviewed every morning. Neipperg had a weakness for diamond rings and Hungarian wines. Marie Louise loved pastry and piquet; and among the favourite amusements of the Court of Parma were blindman's-buff and *morra*, a game wherein a player tries to guess what another player holds in his hand, and gets smacked for divining wrong.

Amid such intellectual pursuits the ex-Empress became so oblivious of her first-born son, that when the young Duke of Reichstadt lay dying at Vienna, and it was suggested to her that it would be a motherly proceeding to go and see him, she was moved to peevish tears and wrath. Neipperg forbore to press the point. He had every reason to be satisfied with his wife's fidelity towards himself; and soon after this little episode, which proved that Marie Louise had a will of her own when she chose to exert it, the magnanimous Duchess ordered the summary expulsion from her dominions of a French artist, who had travelled to Parma for the sake of dedicating to her a picture, which represented the christening of the heir whom she had borne to Napoleon.

The pen of a moralist will dwell humorously, rather than critically, on the soulless personality of Baron Neipperg's wife; for she was only a woman after the manner of all the women who have more sensuousness than sense, and placidity than ambition. If a Frenchman had been required to write her epitaph he might have scratched on her gravestone words to make her ashes stir; but Neipperg would have celebrated her in high-sounding Teuton, as 'a not-to-be-paralleled spouse, and a wholly-by-her-children-engrossed-and-never-in-affection-failing mother.'

Caroline of Naples was a character of altogether nobler mould—a heroine as well as a virtuous woman; and her only fault was that she allowed her too susceptible heart to beguile her into a *mésalliance*, legitimate indeed, but not the less unworthy of her. The Duke de Berry, Caroline's first husband, was not a great man, but he was heir to the French crown; and on the night of the 13th February, 1820, when he was stabbed at the Opera-house by the assassin Louvel, he exacted of her a solemn pledge that she would devote herself to the careful rearing of their unborn child, of whom she was then pregnant. Kneeling by the couch of the murdered

Prince in the crush-room, to which the King had been hastily summoned, and where prelates, peers, field-m Marshals, and cabinet ministers also crowded to see the Count of Artois' son breathe his last, the Duchess obediently vowed that if her unborn child were a son she would make his education the exclusive aim of her life. Content with this promise, the Duke de Berry died in peace ; and



THE DUCHESS DE BERRY.

during the next ten years the Duchess faithfully fulfilled her vow, setting to all widows a pattern of what a bereaved wife should be.

She was not pretty (though she had beautiful arms and a sylph-like form, as anybody can see in Lawrence's well-known portrait of her), but she was a woman of extraordinary fascination, full of sweetness and tact, and a princess every inch. In 1830, the Revolution of July having suddenly overturned the throne of the Bourbons, Charles X.'s tardy abdication in favour of the little Duke de Bordeaux (as he was then called) proved of no avail, and the Duchess, with her son, accompanied the deposed King into exile; but two years later the Duchess de Berry, like another Margaret of Anjou, appeared unexpectedly in the Vendée, and raised the standard of insurrection amongst a peasant population long noted for their loyalty to the White Flag.

Everybody knows the details of this short-lived but spirited civil war, in which the rustic armies, opposed to disciplined troops, were over and over again beaten, but never daunted, till at length, the rebellion having been crushed by sheer force of numbers, the Duchess was obliged to fly in the disguise of a farm-girl, and sought refuge in the cottage of a country pedlar named Deutz. This infamous character betrayed her for a sum of money to M. Thiers, then Home Minister; and the Duchess, having been confined in the Castle of Blaye, was kept there for so many months that she was unable to conceal a second pregnancy, and finally was driven to confess that she had contracted a secret marriage with Count Luchesi-Palli, an Italian.

This avowal detracted nothing from the Royal Princess's honour as a woman; but it destroyed for ever her influence as a party leader. With disgust and words of execration the old nobility of France turned their backs upon her; the aged Charles X., exasperated to frenzy, withdrew from her the custody of her own son; and from that time forth her name was never mentioned in Legitimist circles, save as that of a woman who had brought indelible disgrace upon her house.

All this was a heavy blow to the high-souled Princess; and she had not even the consolation of being able to point to her second husband as a man whose personal merits justified her condescension towards him. He was a good-looking nonentity, a second Neipperg *minus* the whiskers. He dressed well, bowed well, but was a loose fish in morals, and had notoriously not a *scudo* in the world, when his marriage drew him from obscurity, and, of course, made him rich.

However, the gifted Duchess remained exemplarily faithful to this lustreless gentleman, even after she had discovered what poor stuff did duty for brains in his head; and to the end of their union, which was only severed by death, not a word on her part ever gave cause to suspect that she repented of her choice. But that the Duchess bitterly resented exclusion from the political councils of the exiled dynasty was evident from the numerous attempts which she made to recover her lost footing; and she must have felt galled to the soul when she encountered the implacable resolve of all the Royalists to treat her as an entire stranger to their cause.

Even the Count de Chambord was taught to consider that his mother had made an unpardonable mistake; and though his conduct towards her was always dutiful and affectionate, he never accepted political advice of her—which is perhaps the reason why he has failed to ascend the throne of his ancestors; for in 1848 the heroine of the Vendée skirmishes could have given him more spirited counsels than his ordinary mentor, the temporising Duke de Blacas. The Duchess de Berry died eight years ago, still unforgiven by her son's party; and her demise was chronicled in terms so cold that they bordered upon disdain by the newspapers who advocate the Royalist idea.

Now the case of Marie Louise and of Caroline of Naples is that of many other Young Widows whose husbands had not Royal rank, but were great men nevertheless.

What shall be done, for instance, by the relict of an illustrious poet, statesman, inventor, or general, if she be consigned to widowhood at an age when she is still young enough to please? Must she forget that she is a woman, and, seating herself under the shade of a weeping willow, sternly warn off all suitors in the name of the dear departed? Or may she adopt a middle course, and, bestowing her hand upon some well-favoured person, endeavour nevertheless to perpetuate the recollection of her first union by continually sighing over the illustrious dead, till the soul of the new consort is profoundly abashed and wearied thereby?

Gentlemen who have been made victims of this middle course have been heard to declare that they wished they had looked before they leaped; so it may be concluded the experiment is not always satisfactory to one of the two parties most interested in it. But it has also been contended, in respect of the ladies themselves, that they are occasionally so ill-starred as to light upon second husbands

who impatiently decline to join in duets to the glory of their predecessors, and who, after a time, even oblige their wives to content themselves with occasional brief solos sung in a very minor key. Neipperg, refusing to allow the name of Napoleon to be mentioned in his presence, would have been just this sort of creature.

A French writer, lately describing a widow's wedding in that tone of banter which Frenchmen alone are privileged to use in treating of serious matters, expressed the astonishment he had felt on hearing the officiating priest remind the parties of the eternal nature of the marriage-bond, which, though loosed by death on earth, is renewed in paradise. 'Why,' thought he, 'those are the identical words that were used at Madame Millefleurs' first wedding!' and forthwith that curious writer fell to imagining what sort of a scene would occur in paradise when Madame Millefleurs, having survived both her husbands, was at length summoned away in her turn, and found the two gentlemen waiting to claim her at the entrance to the Elysian Fields. The solution suggested was that Madame Millefleurs should boldly declare her preference for a third gentleman who had never been her husband at all, and forthwith pair off with him. Let us hope the powers of Olympus will give consent to this arrangement.

Some share of a great man's fame is justly reflected on the wife who cheered his labours, if not inspired them; and we own to a regard for the widow who is mindful of this fact, and, having enshrined the hero in her heart, makes it the business and pleasure of her life to keep his renown ever fresh. This is the illustrious widow of the conventional type. She edits the great man's correspondence, inaugurates monuments in his honour, perhaps writes a biography of him herself, and presents relics of him to public museums. Sometimes she slightly overdoes all this, and raises a smile among members of a new generation, who are but imperfectly acquainted with the great man's claims to have so much incense consumed over his bones. But if others too soon forget, the zeal of the wife, who cannot forget and will not, so long as she lives, allow her idol's name to be forgotten, is but the more touching; and the kindlier part of society revere the great man's devoted widow, with all her failings—yea, even if she rush combatively into print every time she hears the faintest criticism on the great one's title to immortality.

There are various ways of giving expression to sorrow, however.

There is even the comical way ; and a delightful *feuilletoniste* tells a story in which it appears that the most genuine grief sometimes verges on the ridiculous. He had agreed to accompany the widow of an acquaintance to the establishment of a designer in hair. Curiosity as much as friendship had prompted him to become her escort ; and when they arrived at their destination they found the artist's windows filled with a number of little pictures done entirely in hair, the majority of them representing funereal subjects, such as mausoleums shaded by weeping willows, graves adorned with crosses, gravestones covered with wreaths, and family vaults surmounted by iron railings, the whole with moonlight and romantic effects. There was sufficient to make the coldest-hearted weep.

'Sir,' said the widow to the capillary artist, opening a tiny box which she carried suspended to her belt, 'here is some of Jules' hair.'

'One of your relations, madam ?'

'My husband, sir—my dear departed husband !'

The artist bowed, and took the proffered hair.

'Jules had very little hair, sir, as you can see. Nature had been sparing to him in this respect, and he was obliged to spread his hair about as much as possible to disguise his early baldness.'

'Oh, there is a sufficient quantity, madam. Besides, the hairs are of a very fine quality, supple and soft.' While speaking he had taken up a magnifying-glass to examine them. 'And what do you propose to do with them ?' asked he of the widow.

'Why, I want a little picture ; something in the style of those you have here.'

'Exactly. Do you prefer a landscape or an indoor scene ?'

'I have not yet quite decided what to have.'

'An indoor scene has its merits. It enables us to represent some articles of furniture dear to the departed. But on the whole a landscape is preferable.'

'Ah, you think so ?' asked she.

'Yes. A landscape gives more scope to our imagination. One can utilise the hair of the dead man's beard in arranging the sky and the fleeting clouds. One can make, too, some very pretty fields with the hair in powder. The long hair furnishes poplars of the stateliest kind.'

'Really !' said the widow, who seemed delighted. 'Then you might manage to represent our country house, that Jules liked so much ?'

‘Easily, madam. I should only require a photograph of it.’
‘I happen to have one with me. You see it is very pretty.’
‘Very pretty indeed; and I flatter myself I shall not remain far behind the original. There are innumerable resources in hair.’



‘It is a *châlet* at Nogent, on the banks of the river.’
‘That’s fortunate. A river is one of my specialities, said the artist. ‘Allow me to put one more question to you.’
‘With pleasure, sir.’

‘Did your late husband have any white hairs?’

‘Alas, yes!’ replied the widow. ‘But I took good care to pick them all out.’

‘Ah, that was a mistake. Try to find a few, and bring them to me. Some of the very whitest.’

‘What for?’ inquired she curiously.

‘To represent the river.’

‘Oh, that’s charming!’ said the widow.

‘Leave everything to me, madam, and I will turn out something that will please you—something that will be quite an ornament.’

‘What a pleasant time we have passed!’ remarked the widow to her companion, as she rose to go, with a gratified smile upon her face.

VIII.

WIDOWS UNDER A CLOUD.

OUR next photograph is of a lady who used to travel about the Continent with a toy-terrier and an elderly Scotch maid. She had large pensive eyes, and maintained a well-bred reserve, until, by dint of rather assiduous perseverance, you broke the ice, when she would become chatty and pleasant to a degree which amply repaid all the efforts made to float a conversation. She was clever and well informed, strictly proper withal, without prudery, very neat in her appearance, which denoted easy circumstances, and a charming neighbour at the *table-d’hôte* dinners of the foreign hotel where one met her. She was a widow under thirty, and her husband had been hanged.

There is no need to name the country where this misfortune had befallen him. His wife was quite innocent of any share in his offence, and much sympathy had been expressed for her at the time of the trial; but the fact of her husband having fallen a victim to the obstinate convictions of twelve jurymen had none the less proved an insuperable bar to his widow’s effecting a second matrimonial settlement. To be sure, she had changed her name; but whenever a chance acquaintance seemed on the point of developing into a suitor for her hand—and this happened very often—she would take

an opportunity of candidly saying: 'I think it right to tell you that I was the wife of Mr. Blank, who was executed for murder.'

This communication never failed to act as an extinguisher. With a tightening sensation at the throat, the lover would stare to see if the lady was not joking; but when the serious look that passed into those large eyes of hers convinced him that her words were sober reality, his mind would quickly hurry on to one of two conclusions which suggested themselves with irresistible logic—either this comely widow had never loved the late Blank, and if so, why had she married him? or she *had* loved Blank, and in this case what a prospect for her second husband!

It is bad enough to feel continually between oneself and wife the ghost of a former consort who was an honest man; but when that ghost wears a slip-noose round his neck! And the worst of it is that when women have at any time felt tenderly towards a man who met with a tragical end, that feeling is apt to strengthen wonderful as time wears on. There was a French Marquise whose husband was guillotined during the Revolution. While young the lady remained fairly reticent about this catastrophe; but towards middle age she fell into a way of recounting the martyred nobleman's last moments, over the dinner-table. Between the soup and fish she would tell how he wore white kerseymere breeches in going to his doom; at dessert she imitated the *click* of the knife as it severed his neck; and the hair of every guest would stand on end.

In this case, however, the tragedy related was surrounded by circumstances of truly romantic interest. But how screw any romance out of a man who has been gibbeted? Mrs. Blank, after becoming Mrs. Asterisk, might dismiss all reference to her husband's precipitate decease; but the figure of Blank in the pinioning-room, Blank with the white cap over his face, and Blank disappearing through the drop, were images which must constantly have haunted husband No. 2, and troubled his digestion with uneasy qualms.

Poor Mrs. Blank was roaming about the world in quest of a man who would have the courage to give her a new home and a little love, in spite of the blemish which was none of her own making; and she had not found such a one. Her former friends were not altogether sorry for it, seeing that women in her helpless position—when they have beauty and money—are very liable to become the prey of adventurers, who first rob and then ill-use them. When last seen, she was standing on the deck of one of the steamers that



ply about the Swiss lakes. She held her small dog in her arms, and her rough-featured but kindly Scottish attendant stood by her side. In answer to a bow, she smiled a quiet, rather sad, good-bye, and soon the blue ribbons of her bonnet were a speck in the distance. What became of her, whether she married, or emigrated to the New World, or retired to live in the seclusion of some out-of-the-way continental town, we never heard; but the impression left is that she deserved better than the lonely wandering fate which the crime of a man had allotted her.

Turning the page, we come upon another photograph of a widow under a cloud; but this time it was not the gallows-tree that threw

its shadow over a life. The reason why people fought shy of the graceful feline Mrs. Fox was that, although she was not more than



twenty-eight years old, she had had three husbands, all of whom had died with mysterious suddenness. The three deaths had brought her three fortunes, and the Young Widow was mightily rich in consequence; but at Brighton, where she mostly resided, people whispered of poison, and nicknamed her 'Lucrezia Borgia.'

Toxicologists hold it as an axiom demonstrated by universal experience that, when a person has once administered poison with impunity, the temptation to do so again and again becomes irresistible. A little knowledge concerning the action of drugs, a little prudence in apportioning the doses, a little judgment in selecting the time, a patiently affectionate behaviour towards the victim, and the risks incurred are almost null. The poisoners who come to trouble are the novices in the art, or those who, grown reckless by repeated successes, neglect the precautions which carried them safely through previous experiments. Of course, if a wife flavours her husband's soup with a whole half-pound of ratsbane, bought at the nearest chemist's, she must expect that the coroner will inquire into

the matter. So must the wife who prefaces her drugging with a series of violent domestic scenes, wherein she calls her neighbours to witness that she is married to a brute, and wishes herself well rid of him.

But there are no coroner's juries abroad; whereas numerous popular resorts for invalids exist, where a man's rapid death would excite no manner of surprise. How suspect the loving and tearful young wife, who brings her already ailing husband to drink the waters of Phosphore-les-Bains, and seems so miserably afflicted by his condition? The pair have brought servants with them, and put up at the best hotel, where they pay generously. One of the local doctors is called in, and fee'd on a scale quite magnificent according to his French notions. He prescribes the waters of the place; the patient takes them, and one day dies. But what of that? Phosphore-les-Bains is accustomed to see its broken-down visitors die off like flies; and when the doctor has received a valedictory 1000-franc note in acknowledgment of his precious services, he would be an unmannerly churl if he demanded a *post mortem*, or refused to sign a certificate stating that the patient had succumbed to natural causes. Indeed, if this doctor committed the mistake of hinting at foul play without proof positive, it might cost him his practice. Certainly the hotel-keepers who recommended him would never forgive his having drawn a scandal upon their house; and even the local authorities would frown upon him for trying to scare away visitors from their town.

As the French custom is to bury within forty-eight hours after death, the deceased stranger is soon laid in the local graveyard, and there is an end of him. His sorrowing widow lingers a fortnight in the place, to pay for a handsome tombstone; she discharges her hotel-bill, thanks the attendants of the deceased for their sympathy, and then vanishes, leaving no address, but only the reputation of an excellent open-handed person.

This is what the gossipers of the Brighton Club used to say to one another as they watched the pretty, but suspicious, Mrs. Fox driving up and down the King's-road in her smart pony-chaise, drawn by a pair of frisky greys. She held the reins herself; a boy-groom sat behind, and by her side figured a toothless servile old dame, who was her inseparable companion. Together the pair used to show themselves on the West Pier, at the Aquarium, at the Pavilion on Saturdays, when the garrison band played: they had

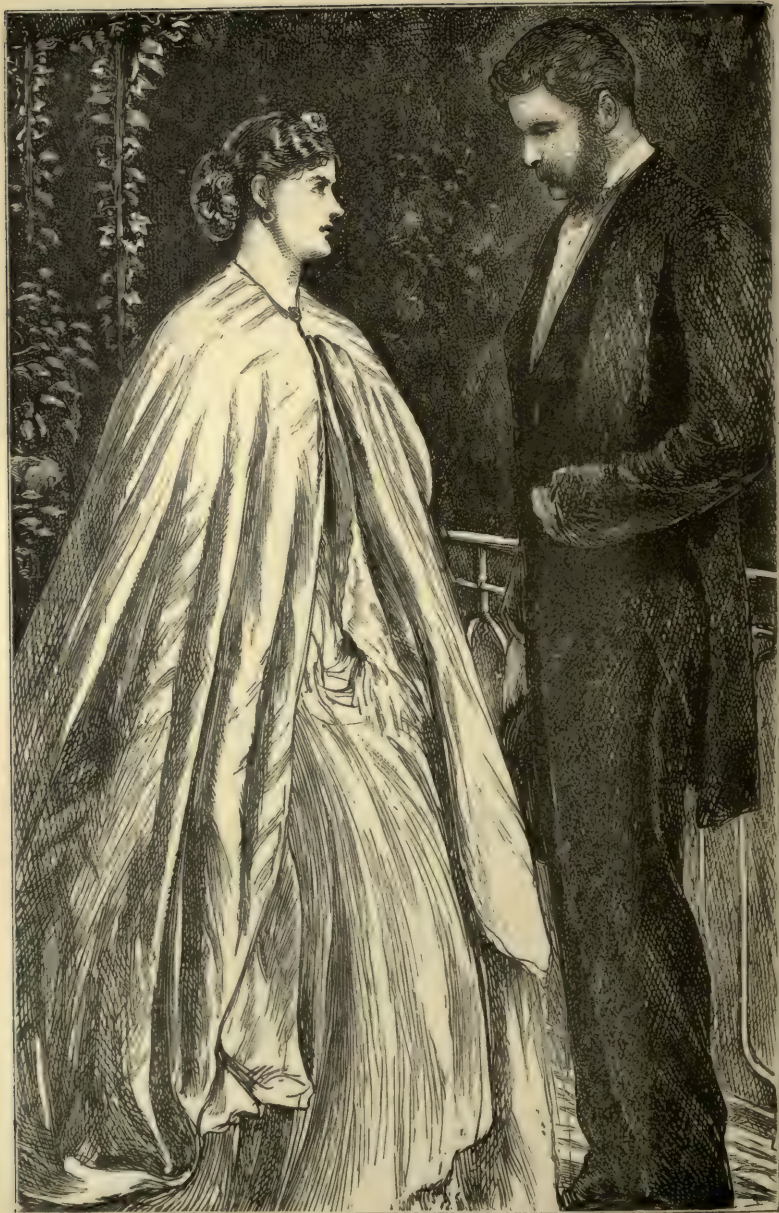
sittings at the Ritualist church, and lived in a showy house on the Marine Parade, where no ladies were ever seen to call.

This isolation was, however, due rather to the circumstance that Mrs. Fox took no steps to cultivate acquaintances among her own sex ; for, had she done so, not a doubt but her drawing-room would have been as well frequented as that of any other wealthy Young Widow. Ladies would hardly have been deterred from calling on Mrs. Fox by a rumour which rested upon not so much as a tittle of authenticated fact.

Probably her nickname owed its origin to the joke of some disappointed suitor ; but, like many other jokes circulated in fun or vindictive malice, it ' took ' famously, and during a whole Brighton season was so pitilessly thrust at all suspected anglers after the Young Widow's fortune, that Mrs. Fox remained, to all matrimonial intents, as completely shunned as if she had been a leper.



Mrs. Fox had never belonged to the innermost circle of good society ; but she was of excellent middle-class rank, well educated, and a capital pianist. Her complexion was pale, her hair dark ; her eyes were keen, and could shoot killing glances. There was, in



CAPTAIN DOUGHTY AND MRS. FOX.

her compact lithe figure, a likeness which suggested the activity of a cat; while the mobile expression of her eyebrows, and her quick nervous way of laughing, were evidences of a temper which would be sure to make her obtain the mastery in any household where the titular head was not a man of exceptionally iron make. Mrs. Fox occasionally alluded, and in feeling terms, to her last husband, but never to the first two; on the whole, she was a person of remarkable attractiveness, and never failed to impress male listeners with the idea that she would make a first-rate wife, and be an ornament to an affectionate husband's home.

A good-looking and much-indebted officer of the hussar regiment in garrison determined to brave the prejudice that was assailing this widow with such a cowardly stupidity, as he called it, and proceeded to pay his court to the lady; but he instantly became the butt of ferocious pleasantries. Some of his brother-officers who could draw papered the mess-room with sketches descriptive of Captain Doughty passing through the progressive agonies of slow poison. There was 'Captain Doughty finding a queer taste in the sherry;' 'Captain Doughty writhing on the hearthrug, with a hand on the pit of his waistcoat and his eyeballs starting from their sockets;' 'Captain Doughty having a conjugal tiff with Mrs. Doughty, and being cautioned by her in the well-known words hurled by Lucrezia Borgia at the Duke of Ferrara: "Guarda a voi, il mio quarto marito!"' (Mind what you are about, my *fourth* husband!)

If Captain Doughty had lived in a duelling country he might have stopped this persecution by challenges; but a British officer has no remedy against chaff but grinning and bearing it, or else removing the causes which gave it rise. This is what Captain Doughty did. He ceased to court the seductive widow, and bore with what face he could the crowning piece of facetiousness of his friends, which consisted in wringing his hands with silent force, and exclaiming, 'Thank Heaven, old fellow!' just as if he had been rescued from inevitable and violent death.

Mrs. Fox's next wooer was a young solicitor, who would have been very glad of her money to set up in business with; but one day he received, by post, a copy of Alexandre Dumas' *Marquise de Brinvilliers*, with a photograph of his *inamorata* pasted on the fly-leaf; and when, having made inquiries, he learned what rumours had dictated this delightful warning, he fled in horror, never to return. A merchant and a naval captain were successively scared

off by similar pranks; and all this while Mrs. Fox, being ignorant of the things bruited against her, could not, for the life of her, understand what made all her lovers act with such inconceivable flippancy and lack of manners.

The present writer became acquainted with Mrs. Fox about a fortnight before the catastrophe which opened her eyes. It was a cruel joke that was played upon her, and proved once again what little consideration women have to expect from the other sex when they are not protected by the strong arm of a male champion, or, failing that, by a blameless reputation.

A masked-ball, in aid of some charitable object, was given at the Pavilion, and Mrs. Fox, who did not generally attend balls, went there under cover of a domino and of a laced mask, which effectually concealed her features. Her companion attended her, and the pair did not mix in the dances, but moved about, watching the fancy dresses and enjoying the music. They had been thus harmlessly disporting themselves during an hour, when one of those ruffians who are to be found in high ranks as well as low strode through the ball in the guise of a policeman, and with his physiognomy travestied but not masked. He was evidently in search of Mrs. Fox, and must have detected her by the ungainly figure of her companion: for, upon espying the two women in the Chinese Room, he marched straight up to them, and, laying a hand roughly on Mrs. Fox's shoulder, thrust a paper before her eyes. What was written on this paper was never ascertained, but the unfortunate widow uttered a piercing shriek and swooned on the floor. The pseudo-policeman beat a hasty retreat, and his victim had to be carried into a retiring-room, whence, after a second fainting fit, which left her weak as water, she was sent home in her carriage.

She never showed herself in public again; but within a week sold her furniture and ponies, and for ever quitted Brighton, leaving no clue to her next destination. The brutal joker did not reveal his identity; but the details of his freak transpired and were variously commented on, most men being of opinion that there must have been a grain of truth in the accusations, which else, said they, would never have struck such deep roots. Possibly, however, Mrs. Fox was simply a widow whose misfortune, rather than whose fault, it had been to lose three husbands in countries where there were no coroners and no inquisitive penny papers to harry her with impertinent questions.



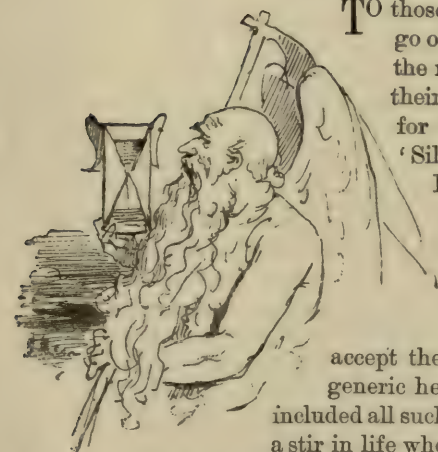
OUR SILVERED YOUTH, OR NOBLE OLD BOYS.

I.

INTRODUCTORY.

TO those hale old boys who wish to go on enjoying themselves after the manner of youngsters, when their hair is (or would be but for dyes) silvery, the name of 'Silvered Youth' may be given.

But I also propose to describe the Old Boy who admits the disabilities of age, as well as the one who affects to ignore them.



The reader will please to accept the notification that under the generic head of 'Noble Old Boys' are included all such old gentlemen as have made a stir in life when young—the quondam pets of Society, the handsome Harrys and hard-riding Dicks of thirty or

forty, or even fifty, years ago; the men who were dandies or beaux at the epoch of tall satin stocks and fawn-coloured waistcoats, who resorted to Crockford's, and drove cabs with diminutive grooms hanging on behind; the men of the generation who were boys when Waterloo was fought, and whose spring-tide of life came at a period when to belong to the English aristocracy was to be a member of the best society in the first country of the world. For England was the leading State then, and there were no two opinions about it.

I do not know but that those were better times than now. I should not say this indiscriminately of all bygone epochs, nor is it suggested that half a century ago life was more enjoyable to the masses than it is at present. But it was so to the privileged few. Between 1815 and 1848 there was a halcyon era of transition between the periwigs, drunkenness, and duelling of old England, and the ubiquitous steam-engines, shoddy, and cheap gentility of the new. Society was more select then; the clubs were more sociable; and travelling, if slower, was a great deal more pleasant.

To go the grand tour in a postchaise of one's own, with a valet, a courier, a tutor, and plenty of letters of introduction, was to see Europe under auspicious circumstances. Cheap tourists had not yet spoiled hotel-keepers, and the respect for the 'milord' was universal. He was received in the first society wherever he went—which is not the case now, when noblemen seldom carry any letters of introduction, unless they mean to settle in a place—and he saw all that was to be seen in the pleasantest fashion. When he returned home, his mind was well stored with lively recollections, and his manners had acquired a polish from contact with foreign aristocracies. He thought the better of his country from the deference which had everywhere been paid him as an Englishman; and having become acquainted with the *élite* of foreigners, he was more disposed to copy what was good in them than what was worthless.

Then England itself, as a habitable place, was more agreeable to noblemen than now. Local customs had not yet died out; provincial society was gay. Elections, county races, hunt-balls—all afforded occasions for noble youngsters to show themselves off in a grand light to the eyes of admiring county belles. It had not yet come to be thought snobbish for noblemen to dress in a style that marked their rank, and to dash about with four horses, postillions, and outriders. They were addressed by their titles, and profusely 'kootooed' to by persons who, nowadays, affect to treat them on a footing of equality—lawyers, bankers, and suchlike fry.



The mania for competitive examinations and equality had not set in. At Oxford, the nobleman wore a gold tassel to his college-cap, and took his degree by favour; if he entered the army, he paid for his commission, and bought his way up to a colonelcy before he was thirty. He was not required to know Euclid or *Kriegspiel*; and he amused himself as he listed. He patronised prize-fights,

cock-fights, and bear-baitings. He was a frequenter of luxurious hells and privileged night-houses. When he betted in public, or knocked a cad down, no policeman asked him for his card, with a view to a summons; and there was no Divorce Court to bring him unpleasantness when his morals went amiss.

The railways, the telegraphs, the penny post, and the penny press, with joint-stock companies, which have caused wealth to run through a million of rivulets, instead of through a few broad channels, as of old—these so-called boons, which have reformed our institutions, democratised Parliament, abolished the caste spirit of the nobility, and mixed up all classes into a salad—have not given to the wealthy aristocrat a single enjoyment which he did not possess before. They have spoiled his shooting, and made hunting more difficult. They have taken the gilding off his prestige, forced him to put a curb on his appetites, and induced him to aim at ‘respectability,’ a term which would have had no sense as applied to a nobleman in the old days.

When the middle-class person in *David Copperfield* remarked that he would rather be knocked down by a man who had blood, than be picked up by one who had none, he gave but a slightly exaggerated expression to a sentiment which was founded on a very solid fact, namely, that a lord was a creature of altogether superior clay to himself. There were Radicals enough in those days who were already declaiming the theories which in these times have been shaped into laws, and have become truisms; but it was the custom to confound Radicals, Dissenters, and innovators generally, under a common and convenient anathema as blackguards, and the fine gentlemen who did this at their clubs were seconded by all the reputable newspapers of the period.

Writing of Mr. John Bright in 1840, a leading Tory paper remarked: ‘John Bright has gone on a visit to some friends in Yorkshire: let us hope the loyal yeomen of that county will give the disaffected vagabond the hiding he deserves.’ At about the same date *The Times* wrote: ‘Thomas Babington Macaulay has gone to show his *uncouth figure* at Windsor.’

Aristocratic haughtiness was natural in an epoch when noble lords thus had incense burned under their noses. It may be said that they get plenty of such free-will offerings now. They do; and their power as a class is perhaps greater than ever, but it is a power held somewhat on sufferance, and which the wielders must feel to be precarious. Like threatened things, it may live long and

survive us all—you, me, and the man next door; but this does not alter the fact that young noblemen in these times are of a different quality from their fathers and grandfathers.

In the Noble Old Boys of to-day we have the last representatives of a class who flourished at a period when what might be called the 'Divine right of lords' was at its strongest as a popular creed. In a few more years the last will have been seen of those men who devoutly believed—and acted as if they believed—that there was no human being on earth to compare with a lord, and no country to match with England that bred him. Why, there are some lords nowadays who are cosmopolitans, and have actually come to doubt that a Briton could thrash any two foreigners single-handed!

II.

CHARACTERISTICS COMMON TO ALL NOBLE OLD BOYS.

I HAVE searched my memory for facts respecting Noble Old Boys of my acquaintance, and have found types so various that it is only



after some little reflection that I have been able to sort them in generic classes. Old Boys differ as much from one another as young ones. Age does not clothe all men in one uniform livery of greyness and wrinkles, for there are some who show more signs of decrepitude at sixty than others do at eighty.

This one has a bald pate, shrunk shanks, and a red nose; that other, frosty white hair, pink cheeks, and a limpid eye. To the one come rheumatism and biliousness; to the other only a little gout now and then, acting as a purgative to all other ills. This Old Boy is a confirmed misogynist and is disliked of women; that other marries at seventy and has children. The good looks of one im-

prove with age; so that, while trotting towards the grave with an alert step and a flower in his button-hole, he is handsomer, nattier, gayer than he ever was, and cuts an altogether winsome figure beside his old chum, who used to be called 'Beau Jack,' and who has dwindled into a cantankerous curmudgeon with a face wrinkled as a baked apple.

In some Old Boys qualities have mellowed like good wine. Gentleness, courtesy, invariable good-humour, in-

dulgence towards human weaknesses, mark the man who has not paid for his experience too dear; while the cynic, who has nothing kind to say of his fellows, shows that life has not been a successful venture with him, and that in buying experience at the cost of all his illusions he stands in the position of a man who has been charged extravagantly for an article of doubtful value. The suspiciousness of the cynic is not wisdom, though he always accounts it such; it is to the worldly prudence of the shrewd but benevolent Old Boy what vinegar is to wine.

So Victor Hugo was not quite right when he wrote:

'A force de marcher l'homme erre, l'esprit doute,
Tous laissent quelquechose aux buissons de la route—
Les troupeaux leurs toisons et l'homme sa vertu.'

Victor Hugo himself has not let his virtue be shredded by the



brambles on the roadside, and he might be cited as a fine type of the Noble Old Boy, who has remained warm-hearted and impulsive despite the snows of years. It may be doubted, indeed, whether the cynical Old Boy ever had much virtue to lose.



Of the characteristics common to all Noble Old Boys two stand out prominently—selfishness more or less intense, and obstinacy.

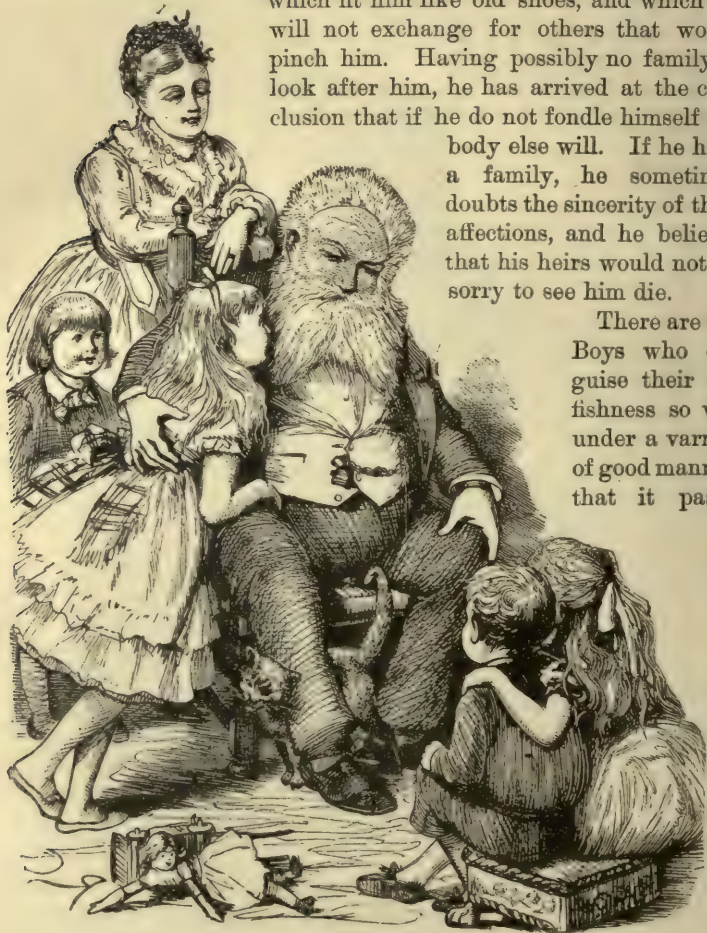
If there be unselfish Old Boys they are exceptions which only prove the rule. Selfishness, which is often a symptom of the instinct of self-preservation, is apt to grow strongly upon the man past middle age. He knows what things are hurtful to him, and is careful to avoid them. He is anxious about his health. He has

made up his mind on certain points of politics and religion, and, not liking to have his faith in them disturbed, he resents conversations which only vex or bore him. He has contracted habits

which fit him like old shoes, and which he will not exchange for others that would pinch him. Having possibly no family to look after him, he has arrived at the conclusion that if he do not fondle himself nobody else will. If he have

a family, he sometimes doubts the sincerity of their affections, and he believes that his heirs would not be sorry to see him die.

There are Old Boys who disguise their selfishness so well under a varnish of good manners that it passes



almost unperceived; but it will crop up now and then in little points, although these may only be noticeable to the eye of a stranger. In his own household, amongst his relatives or servants, the good Old Boy's whims are not thought to be selfish. They are

looked upon as the habits inseparable from age, and women especially will show infinite tenderness in humouring them. Let the Old Boy be fairly good-natured and grateful, and it will be accepted that his years give him a claim to the constant worship and alacritous service of all about him. Every one is accustomed to his ways, and he is waited upon so ungrudgingly that he does not at all suspect that he is putting the smallest tax on the amiability of his familiars.

But his selfishness will appear if he be asked to render any service which would disturb him in the least. The best of Old Boys will not go much out of his way to assist anybody, unless his bump of benevolence be so abnormally developed that kindness is rather a pleasure to him than a task. Generally speaking, the Old Boy finds a hundred plausible reasons why he should not join in pulling his neighbour out of a pit; and his more or less goodness will be evinced in the considerate formulæ in which he will clothe his refusal, so that it may not seem brutal.

Obstinacy is another form of selfishness. Old Boys are obstinate in adhering to their ideas because they are persuaded that they have more sagacity than young ones, and they hold to their persuasion because it would humiliate them to suppose the contrary. A surrender of favourite crotchets, which the Old Boy fondly deludes himself to be based on the experience of a lifetime, would involve a shunting of his thoughts into new grooves, where they would not run smoothly. He is by no means inclined to give up his pet prejudices, likes, or dislikes, in deference to the theories of enthusiasts young enough to be his grandchildren.

He does not much believe in theories which advocate change, for he has noticed that *plus ça change et plus c'est la même chose*, as M. Alphonse Karr, a French Old Boy, has dryly put it. He had his own days of infatuation when he was young, and believed that Reform Bills would make the people happy, that the establishment of police would put a stop to crime, and that International Exhibitions would close the era of wars. He has lived to perceive his delusions. So when he hears a young man boast of some new mode of progress which is to result in transforming all mankind, he shakes his head, and feels inclined to remark, 'I have travelled over that old road, and know too well whither it leads.'

There are as many sorts of obstinacy as there are sorts of men. There is the aggressive, the combative, and the pliant. One Old



ALPHONSE KARR.

Boy will rush out, *proprio motu*, to battle against the ideas of the day; another will wait till his own crotchets are assailed before hitting back; a third will not hit back at all, but will parry novelties with a gentle hand, which seems to be always on the point of yielding and never does.

If the two first varieties supply the backbone of political and

social conservatism, it is the last which furnishes the marrow. Water will stop the passage of an express train more effectually than an iron barrier; and there is no such obstructive in the way of progress as the Old Boy who offers a mild and smiling resistance to innovation. He is a converter of women and sentimentalists.



He makes weak men hesitate, and damps the ardour of the impetuous. His temperate objections, urged in the blindest tones, cannot be roughly thrust aside; they command respect, and have to be gently overcome by patience and cogent argument such as few men have at their disposal.

This it is that gives the polite, soft-spoken, and withal stubborn Old Boy such an undisputed authority in every social circle. It enables him to play the part of Nestor, and to put forth his prejudices as the outpourings of a wisdom almost preternatural, though often this so-called wisdom is but error with grey hairs.

III.

POLITICAL OLD BOYS.

AMONG the Noble Old Boys whom I most admire I know one who may be seen walking down to the Carlton every day towards five o'clock.

He is spare and natty, irreproachably dressed, and of polished manners. In rainy weather he drives down to the club in a quietly appointed brougham, but he generally prefers walking, for the sake of exercise. He must be past seventy now, and can scarcely be said to look younger; for though his grey eyes are clear and his step is elastic, his face is wrinkled like old parchment, and his hair and beard are white as swansdown. His name is Lord Baxtayre, and he is one of the most active wire-pullers on the Tory side.

He has never held office of any sort, though he might often have had it for the asking. He is not a K.G. or a G.C.B.; he never makes speeches; and his influence has never been officially acknowledged by the party leaders, nor is it alluded to in the press. But he may continually be seen trotting about from this statesman to that; he acts as intermediary in political negotiations; he helps to make cabinets; he has a voice in the distribution of honours; and a good word from him is of more use to a struggling man than a direct promise from a placeman.

Lord Baxtayre knows more people of note than any other man in London; and this comes of his having been always rich, sociable, unambitious, and unmarried.

He inherited his peerage and 20,000*l.* a year when he was just of age. His income was large enough to satisfy his whims, not large enough to saddle him with duties as a landowner. His estate was small, and more ornamental than productive; but he drew his money from safe house-property, which increased in value

every year, and made him much richer than he seemed to be. An offshoot of one of the great ducal families, he had a footing in the highest and selectest society—that which is intimate with crowned heads; whilst his simple barony allowed him to consort on seemingly equal terms with men who would not have felt at home with a duke or a prince. He had been at Eton and Oxford, but not in the army; and this gave him an additional latitude in choosing his friends, for regimental life draws a man into coteries against his will. Even a guardsman who has sold out after five years keeps something of pipe-clay about him to the end of his days.

Lord Baxtayre was handsome, clever, and had epicurean tastes that withheld him from the excesses which produce gross sensations and shatter the nerves and temper. He tasted of dissipation just enough to try its flavour, but without surfeiting himself. He found no pleasure in drinking hard, losing large sums at the gaming-table, or mixing with vulgar wenches who wore diamonds. He devoted a few years to leisurely travel, residing in palaces more frequently than in hotels, and formed a number of acquaintances whose friendship was worth having.

On his return, numerous attempts were made to inveigle him into marriage, and doubtless once or twice he was very nearly being caught; but he surmounted the danger, and never repented it. Without harbouring any objections against matrimony, he was too nice in his requirements to commit himself hurriedly; he had habits which, though unostentatious, were expensive; marriage would have compelled him to retrench; and, before he could make such a sacrifice, he must find a woman for whose sake it would be really worth while to make it. So one chance after another slipped, till my lord found himself too old to marry. Women might not have thought so, but he did. He had so often laughed at the notion of an Old Boy being able to drive a young wife without accident, that he had the consistency to smile when it was suggested that he should himself make the experiment.

But while leading an unwedded life, Lord Baxtayre had not shunned social gatherings. He passed his autumns and winters in rounds of country visits; during the London season he was present at all dinners and parties where great and agreeable people were to be met. He also took a second-hand interest in politics, from seeing so many of his friends struggle for the offices of State; and,

without caring much about measures, he looked on with amusement at the game of the men who introduced them. He frequently attended the debates in the House of Lords, and always recorded his vote on party questions. He did not speak; but sometimes an old schoolfellow in the Cabinet would put him up to ask a question which Government desired to answer in a way of its own, and Lord Baxtayre was ever ready for such obliging work. In the days of voting by proxy, he held the proxies of several brother peers who were too lazy to come up to town during the dog-days for the purpose of discharging their duty as hereditary legislators. Hence it arose that he was in frequent conference with the party 'whips;' then he came to exercise the functions of an amateur 'whip' himself, and to canvass for votes when they were wanted on great occasions, not only in the Upper House, but among the Commons.

He did this quite charmingly, for he never mixed up cant with his solicitations. He would talk over a man while sipping coffee after dinner, or between two races at Ascot. He begged support for So-and-So, and said nothing about the Bill which So-and-So was trying to pass. His appeals, being based on personal grounds, were backed by personal allurements; and as he was faithful in seeing to the fulfilment of the promises he made, his arguments often fell into willing ears. He would have haughtily cut any Minister who should have hesitated to grant him the ribbon, the baronetcy, or the post under Government which he had thrown out as a bait to the parliamentary conscience.

He was of great use to young Ministers who had just entered the Cabinet, for he would kindly bespeak fair play for them at the hands of jealous rivals. His circle of acquaintances comprised members of both parties, and men and women of every age and rank, all of whom looked up to him and were glad to secure his goodwill. As he had never been known to commit a blunder, or to show temper, or to preach nonsense—as he was, indeed, a nobleman every inch—it was felt that he conferred a favour on the men whom he condescended to cajole, all the more so as he could reward with social benefactions those who did not covet more solid boons. It was wonderful how the persons whom Lord Baxtayre took up were welcomed in society, and equally curious how those upon whom he frowned were dropped. Yet he was not vindictive, and never uttered malicious things. His fiat of displeasure was decreed rather by what he left unsaid than by what he said.

Lord Baxtayre has now arrived at an age when most of the men who manage the business of the country must seem to him mere youngsters. Nor does he think much of them, even making allowance for their rawness. He continues to work at his lobbying trade, because he is asked to do so, no man being so competent as he to smooth ruffled vanities, or to effect reconciliations between politicians who have fallen together by the ears in disputing about the public good.

Ladies, too, often implore him to adjust little quarrels which



have arisen in the partition of official loaves and fishes; and there are times when he might fancy himself a cardinal-confessor, so delicate are the points of political casuistry submitted to him by fair lips. Women are never so frank as when consulting a benevolent Old Boy whom they know to be an admirer of their sex. Lord Baxtayre may wag his head, and declare, laughing, that he has no influence at all—that the things begged of him are quite beyond his power to give; their ladyships know better, and if a first interview fail they try a second.

This secretly flatters the old lord, who has no mean opinion of himself as a diplomatist, though of late he has rather lost his niceness of perception in reading human character. He has become anecdotal, and is scarcely aware himself how much his good opinion of a man is biassed by the latter's willingness to lead him on into relating old stories about Mr. Canning and Lord Melbourne. He can talk about these worthies by the half-hour. He knows twice as much about the secret history of the Reform Bill as is told in the *Greville Memoirs*; and is confidentially communicative about the scandals which occurred in foreign courts two generations ago. His listeners would often like him to touch on scandals of a later date, but he has too much self-respect to retail tattle about living celebrities. Between the man who bedaubs the characters of the dead and him who defames persons who are alive there is a difference, for the one is a chronicler and the other a tale-bearer. Good old Lord Baxtayre has a horror of tale-bearing, because it is vulgar—the vice of journalists and Methodist parsons.

Politics may conduce to a man's amusement, but if taken up in an ambitious spirit by a nobleman whose brain rattles rather loose inside his pate, they may produce such a droll distraught creature as poor Lord Crooney.

Crooney started in life with a notion that he would become Prime Minister. He went into the House of Commons; he spouted; he had his hour of success when the fate of a Cabinet depended upon his acceptance or rejection of the seals of the Waste Paper Office. He accepted those seals, and during three months of a Recess he had a predominant voice in Cabinet councils. When Parliament met the Cabinet was thrown out, and Crooney has never from that day to this held office again, even when his party was in; but he has never forgotten those three months of his glory. He has

written a book about them ; he seasons his daily conversation with allusions to them. They flare out like a patch of scarlet in the grey roll of his past life.

Crooney was consoled with a peerage for his exclusion from place. He had proved himself a noodle, and so it was adjudged that he was worthy to have a permanent hand in making our laws, and that his descendants should do so after him for ever ; for such is the Constitution.

He looked upon his coronet as a reward, not as an extinguisher, and it took him years to understand that his party had no intention of requesting his services again. At first he was considerably asked to waive his claims in behalf of some one who might turn dangerous if not introduced into the Cabinet, but he was promised that preference would be given him at the next vacancy.

Somehow, when that vacancy came, preference was given to some one else ; and at the next Whig accession the Administration was formed without Crooney being so much as consulted. Astonishment changing into disgust, he wrapped himself in the dignified sulkiness of one who has been unhandsomely treated. He felt sure that there was some cabal at the bottom of his ostracism, and mentally accused 'that pettifogging A.' and that 'disreputable B.' of fearing him because his visual faculties were too keen ; wherefore, desiring to show that he could not be snubbed with impunity, he constituted himself the censor of his party. He made it his business to put taxing questions to the occupants of the Treasury bench in the Upper House ; he stuffed his mind with the contents of blue-books ; he delivered long and solemn speeches to warn his friends that he only voted for them with great reluctance ; and it was gall to him to notice that the newspapers always compressed these wordy harangues of his into twenty lines or so.

Lord Crooney wears one of those spencers that were in vogue thirty years ago ; his coat-tails stick out under it, bulging with papers ; his nose and cheeks are red ; his hat has a long nap, which stands erect ; and all this gives him the air of a Norfolk turkey-cock.

His lordship's resemblance to this proud fowl is still greater when he stands up to speak ; for he cranes his wrinkled throat forward, nods a wisp of greyish-red hair which surmounts his brow, and gobbles his words inarticulately. The poor Old Boy cannot understand why the peers troop out of the House as soon as he

risers on his legs, so that he is left with the Lord Chancellor, the clerks, the reporters in the gallery, and a casual stranger or two for his audience. He attributes this isolation to a culpable lack of interest in the great questions of the day, and augurs ill of the future of a country whose senators thus turn a deaf ear to the warnings of experience. He has not renounced his hopes of returning to office. He always votes with his party, so as to identify himself with its good and evil fortunes; and it is especially in the hours of defeat that his staunchness comes out. There is something almost pathetic then in the valour with which he rises to do battle for the men who have flouted him. He looks like a veteran chanticleer plying his beak in defence of lusty young cocks.

Lord Crooney is married, but he does not derive much encouragement from his wife. His politics bore her, as they do everybody. Just as Lord Baxtayre excites interest and amusement whenever he talks, Lord Crooney provokes yawns. The one thinks the other a flippant fellow, the former reckons the latter a dull dog. The discrepancies between the characters of the two are seen in the letters they write. Lord Crooney indites long effusions to *The Times* on all the questions of the day; Lord Baxtayre never pens anything but short private notes, tailing off with a compliment or an epigram. To Crooney jokes about politics seem monstrous; but Baxtayre holds that politics are nothing if not subjects for sarcasm.

When Crooney dies his executors will find drawers full of manuscripts, carefully sorted and indexed, with a view to publication; and out of all this they will not be able to draw the materials of a readable volume. But Baxtayre's executors will not discover a line that will compromise the deceased; and yet the recollections he will have bequeathed will be so numerous and varied, that in fifty years' time anecdotes about the witty Lord Baxtayre will abound in every book that treats of the present era. Nor is it doubtful that there will be several volumes devoted wholly to analyzing the character and recording the pithy sayings of this remarkable man.

IV.

A HORSEY OLD BOY.

FROM Westminster to Epsom the transition is brief, seeing how many links there are in England between politics and horse-racing. Does not Parliament adjourn over Derby-day? Are not grants for Queen's Plates included yearly in the estimates, when proposed grants for a national theatre are scouted with derision? And is not every discussion on the abuses of the turf, betting, the running of two-year-olds, or gate-money meetings, certain to command a full attendance of the House? Nay, at the approach of the Derby, of Ascot week, and of Goodwood, do we not see sweeps at a guinea the ticket organised in the tea-rooms of both Lords and Commons, and Noble Old Boys gadding about to collect subscribers? Who can say that we are not a lively race, considering how much more our lawgivers are interested in questions affecting horses than in those which concern the well-being of our fellow-subjects in India?

Every right-minded person must feel great esteem for the Old Boy who has left a fortune on the turf without dropping a single plume of his character. The temptations of the earth are so multifarious, and they have transformed so many a well-bred youngster into a blackleg, that I count him to be an exceptionally honest man whom the possession of a racing-stud has impoverished. Rogues of average intelligence are seldom permanently ruined by the turf. They speedily learn the tricks of the trade. What with running 'dark' horses, 'pulling' favourites, laying by commission against their own colours, and scratching at the eleventh hour, they are soon in a position to recoup themselves for the losses which every man endures when he first begins to gamble in horseflesh.

But for the genuine sportsman, who is devoted to horse-racing as a gallant sport; who buys judiciously, trains carefully, backs his own stable through thick and thin, and aspires only to win his cups and his money fairly—for such a one there is generally no recouping. He is like a guileless countryman playing cards against sharpers. His trainer, jockeys, and stable-boys will mostly be in league against him; for the honestest he is, so much the less chance will they have of making money, except by betraying his interests.

Things have come to the pass that an upright stud-owner must be prepared to pay 20,000*l.* a year for his amusement, or, if he cannot afford this, he must become bankrupt.

Among those who have been reduced to the latter fate, I know of no more genial Old Boy than Lord Trottingham. He comes of a stock who have always been as honest as adventurous; two qualities which mate as well as a dean on a runaway charger. He took to the turf when young, because he liked it. He had a large fortune then, and doubted not that by making a good selection of yearlings, intrusting them to a shrewd trainer, and running them with crack jockeys up in all the principal races, he should be able, if not to clear large profits, at least to pay his expenses. Stated conversationally, the speculation seemed safe enough to convince the seven sages of Greece. In any other walk of life but the turf the system must have led to a success. What more can a man do to win success than to deserve it?

Somehow, though, Lord Trottingham never did anything but lose money by the hatful. His trainer so managed things that he was always lured on to risk large sums on chances which seemed dead certainties. Every year the stable turned out some beautiful horse that did wonders at starting. One year it was a colt that carried off the Two Thousand Guineas, another year a filly that won the One Thousand in a canter. On the strength of these achievements, my lord never failed to pile up his bets on the Derby, Oaks, &c., mountains high, his trainer exhorting him to do so. 'Never fear, my lord, we'll win you the blue ribbon,' was this worthy's regular assurance. But though Lord Trottingham's horses might head the betting, and though they might struggle gamely in front of the whole field until within sight of the winning-post, something always occurred in the last fifty yards to make them lose.

Sanguine as he was, Lord T. had to give up this sport at last. He had felled all his timber, dipped his estates into mortgages as far as they would go, and taken to kite-flying into the bargain. The day came when his last hopes depended on a Derby, and he lost. Those who saw him in the Stewards' Stand on this memorable occasion say it was pitiful to hear the accents in which he exclaimed, 'Highflyer wins!' as the crack of a rival stable dashed past his own favourite just on the post. Had the result been otherwise, Lord Trottingham would have won 200,000*l.*; as it was, this failure proved his



LORD TROTtingham AND HIS TRAINER.

last 'plunge,' and soon afterwards the flood of his debts washed him to the feet of one of the Commissioners of Bankruptcy in Basinghall-street.

The owner of an entailed property is seldom quite beggared ; and Lord Trottingham still contrived to make a tolerable figure on the income which his creditors allowed him. Moreover, he eked it out by literary productions. He had good grit in him, and found that he could turn his turf experiences to account by acting as correspondent to sporting papers. Editors were proud to employ

him, as well they might; for the initial 'T.,' wherewith he signed his contributions, soon came to attract attention as a symbol of sound judgment and truth.

No man could give an opinion on horseflesh in terms so shrewd as this peer, who had been so oft accused of infatuation as to the merits of his own horses. Without pretending to be a prophet, he generally selected the winners of the great events; and he might have ended by restoring his fortunes had he chosen to back his opinion with heavy sums. But he was too thoroughly honourable to risk a single guinea more than he could pay. There had never been a smudge of any sort on his name, and it would have broken his heart if he had been obliged to abscond to Boulogne after being posted as a defaulter at Tattersall's. He was content if he could net a snug 500*l.* a year by his bets; and when he found that he could earn about twice as much by his pen, he generously surrendered the allowance made him by his creditors, though the doing so obliged him to pinch himself not a little, for he was unversed in the art of making shillings go a long way.

A Noble Old Boy this, and a prime favourite on the turf. Trainers, jockeys, book-makers, all know his cheery grey head and the sound of his breezy voice, buoyant and fresh as healthy weather. He never misses a race of importance, except when a touch of gout lays him up now and then, as a penalty for a little too much indulgence in port-wine. He is a steward of several meetings, and as a member of the Jockey Club was often consulted about handicaps by the infallible 'Admiral,' now departed. But Lord Trottingham is too much of a sportsman not to feel that horse-racing in these days is becoming less and less a thing of fair-play. His eyes have opened at last to the tricks of trainers; and though his experience has come too late to be of much use to himself, he endeavours to convey it to the rising generation in the occasional articles which he devotes to the exposure of turf abuses. He has a capital literary style, pungent, good-humoured, and gentlemanlike. He has published a book of anecdotal reminiscences, and now and then breaks out into poetry, tuning society verses with gay jingling rhymes, pleasant as the bells of a sleigh.

V.

A M.F.H.

ONE of Lord Trottingham's fastest chums is 'Old Grumby,' as he is called in the shires—Sir Thomas Grumby as he figures in the *Baronetage*. This is an Old Boy who has devoted the energies of a lifetime to pursuing foxes, and who is more persuaded than ever at five and sixty years of age that Providence created the fox for no other purpose than to afford sport to gentlemen like himself.

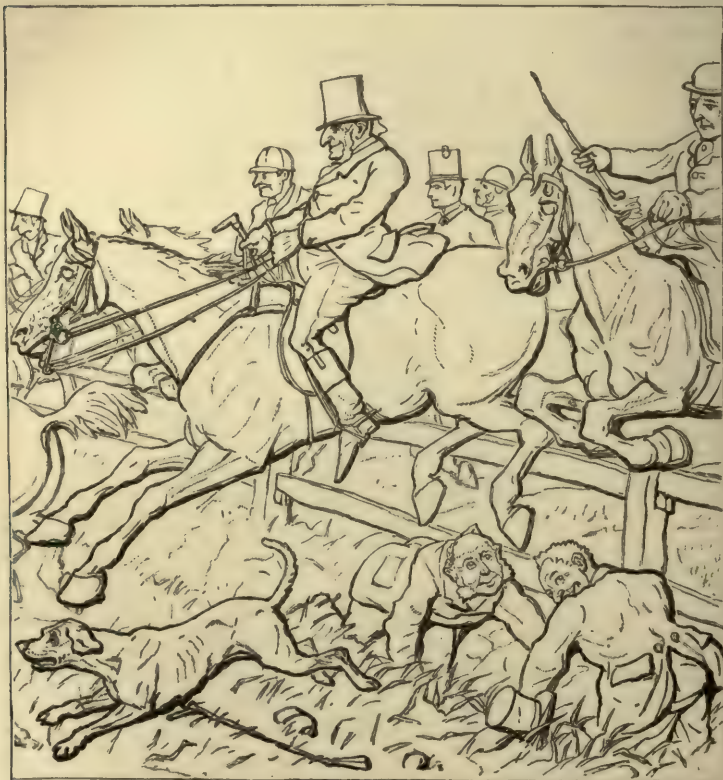
He and Trottingham were at school together, and afterwards served in the same cavalry regiment, where they were both famed for their hard and straight riding to hounds. They had slim waists



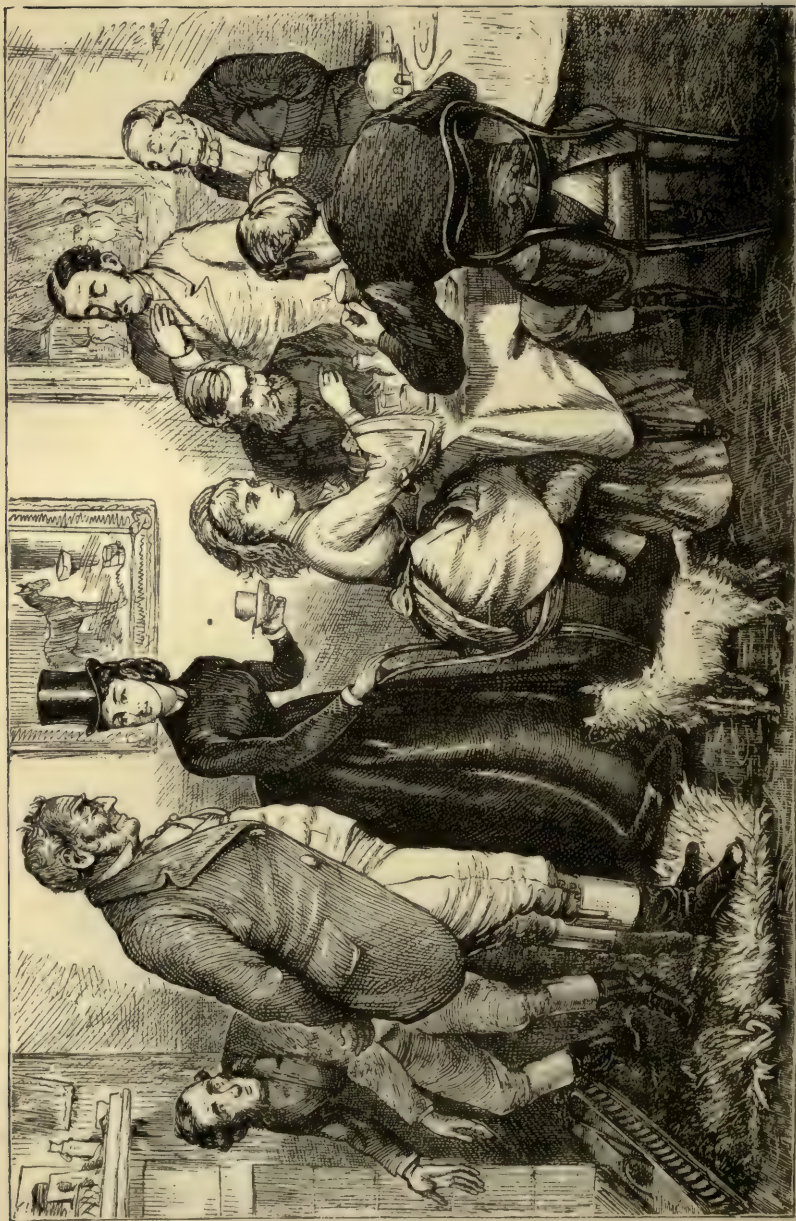
then, and would have thought it preposterous for a man weighing seventeen stone to gallop across country as Sir Thomas now does. The Old Boy will not do Banting, as his doctors advise; he likes his beer, potatoes, and game-pies; but he is determined to hunt all the

same, and is much perplexed to find animals strong enough to carry him.

Tom Grumby never had a racing-stud, and it was a pity that Trottingham did not hearken to his friend's caution against embarking in such speculations. 'What is the fun of making others race when you can gallop yourself?' T. G. used to say; and he would boast that hunting gave you all the excitement to be got from the turf, and for a tithe of the expense. There was the



excitement of being pitched on one's head included. Old Grumby has broken nearly every limb in his body, and has tried every variety of posture for descending off a saddle against one's will. But bumps and fractures have not shaken his nerves, and, as he



BREAKFAST BEFORE THE MEET, AT GRUMBY HALL.

philosophically remarks: 'It is better to be pitched off one's seat into a soft ploughed field, than to go a cropper in the Bankruptcy Court, as poor Trott has done.'

Old Grumby is a great power in his county, for he hunts the best pack there, and discharges his duties as M.F.H. in a whole-hearted spirit. No general could be more anxious in planning a campaign than the Old Boy shows himself in catering for the winter's sport of his subscribers. He is vigilant to see that earths are not stopped by crusty keepers, that fences are not wired by sulky farmers, and that ditches shall not be widened in any part of the county without due notice being given to him in writing, to prevent accidents.

He has his serious doubts as to whether landowners ought to be allowed to make alterations in their fields without permission from the hunt. He calls it spoiling land to change its surface in any way, whether by dyking, draining, or building. He loathes the sight of an engineer coming to trace the line of a new railway. Once he got himself elected to Parliament, chiefly to oppose the cutting of a line which would have destroyed one of the best runs in his district, and he succeeded. The line had to go somewhere else.

There is a Lady Grumby, and a number of young Grumbys, varying between eight years old and eighteen, who all have horses or ponies, and hunt as soon as they can be trusted to face a hedge without blinking. Old Grumby superintends this part of their education himself, and he has never yet been saddened by seeing one of the youngsters play the 'funk.' The boys are accustomed to be thrown headlong among turnips; the girls think nothing of getting soused in a broad ditch. If so be that the patriarchs hunted, they must have looked as old Grumby does when he rides home of an evening after a stiff day, with all his young people behind him.

Grumby Hall is full of foxes' brushes, pads, and masks. It is a family custom that each of the youngsters must win his or her first gold watch by being in at a 'death;' and the M.F.H. is wont to apportion the pocket-money of his offspring according to their prowess in the field. Goodness knows what prodigies have been achieved by the young missies in view of obtaining trinkets to wear at the hunt-balls. Jewellery and fox-slaying are so naturally associated in their minds, that when they see a girl with earrings

and a necklace, they interpret these things to be badges of distinction, like the stripes on a sergeant's sleeve.

The girls, like the boys, hang their trophies in their rooms. They can saddle their horses without the help of a groom; they wear leather breeches when mounted; they would flout the man



who should propose to show them the way over a hedge; and they will never marry any but fox-hunters, lest they disgrace themselves in the eyes of old Grumby, who would scarcely admit that a non-hunter could be a gentleman, unless he had a wooden leg



AT THE CATTLE SHOW.

which debarred him from riding, or an empty purse which kept him from buying a proper mount. On this last point the Old Boy is extremely touchy, and confesses that a man who cannot afford a good horse had better not hunt at all, than turn a noble sport into ridicule.

On his off-days old Grumby does a little shooting, but his preserves are not over-stocked, for he hates *battues*. He thinks that a man should have to toil after his game, whatever it is, and he would disown a son whom he should catch entering for a pigeon match. He encourages them to play cricket in the summer, or to boat; but he prefers polo or a little desultory steeplechasing for practice. The month of May generally sees him in London, buying hacks, ponies, and clean half-breds for next year's use. He has to exercise considerable judgment in the selection of the small Shetland that will carry his youngest girl, and the fifteen-hand black mare who will not prove too much for the second Miss Grumby, who has just turned sixteen.

For himself, the exigencies of his growing girth make him each year harder to suit. He casts about for colossal brutes seventeen hands high, and with as much wind as pneumatic machines. These cost dear; but he is no curmudgeon in buying horse-flesh, having never yet found a cheap horse but proved too dear in the long-run. However, his shrewdness often enables him to get easy terms for animals whose owners have not suspected them to be so good as they turned out when they have been trained in the Grumby stables.

For the festivities of London our M.F.H. does not care a rap; and he resigned his seat in Parliament because of the duties it laid upon him in the matter of going to parties. He divides his time between Tattersall's, the shows at the Agricultural Hall, and his club, where he dines with other ruddy Old Boys from the shires. His drinks are beer, port-wine, and brandy-and-water, and he has no high opinion of your light French wines and vinegary Rhenish vintages, which sour the palate, he says, without warming the blood. In the evening he plays whist at half-a-crown the point; and it would not be easy to find an Old Boy who can do a more gallant rubber, never getting excited if he wins, or looking glum if he loses. Many a professed gamester might take pattern by him; but as with hunting, so with whist, old Grumby thinks it essential to accept the ups and downs of fortune with



OUR M.F.H. AT THE CATTLE SHOW.

a smiling face. Some fathers might possibly raise their children to a higher intellectual level than this Old Boy, but none could better inculcate in them the principles which make brave men and honest women. The young Grumbys are frank, fearless, and truthful, and no more could be said for an Archbishop's progeny.

VI.

THE THEATRICAL OLD BOY.

NOT the superannuated actor, nor the playwright whose hand has lost its cunning, and who has consequently turned critic, nor the managerial Old Boy, who is often a queer type to study; but the Old Boy who has been a patron of the drama from his youth up, and still makes it his chief business to attend theatres, paying for his place, and never begging free admissions.

This is a point to be noted; for the Old Boy who figures on free lists, or who coaxes tickets out of authors and journalists, is invariably a grumbler. He compares every new performer disparagingly with Macready, the Kembles, and the two Keans—though while the younger Kean was alive, he said that the man could not hold a candle to his father. He says the same of Charles Mathews, Farren, and of every other actor who has had a father on the stage. Take him to see Toole, and he remembers how much better Liston was; when seeing J. S. Clarke, he shrugs his shoulders, and quotes the name of some bygone comic whom no one recollects save himself. Not even the beauty and grace of modern women find favour in his sight, and he is not content unless he can hint that the race of tragedy queens, and even of *soubrettes*, has become extinct. He growls at scenery, at costume, at dialogue. He professes to be a classic, and to bemoan the contempt into which the 'unities' have fallen. The very improvements in the accommodation for the audience—the luxury of the boxes and the soft-cushioning of the stalls—strike him as evidences of theatrical decadence.

The genuine Theatrical Old Boy is not such an atrabilious creature. I know one, named Lord Lamatour, whose judgment on dramatic matters I would sooner accept than that of any critic alive. It must have been about the time of the O.P. riots at Covent Garden that he was first taken to the play, but his memories of the past do not cramp his appreciation of the present. He renders justice to bygone worthies, and doubtless there were pretty faces behind the footlights when he was young, which, looked back upon now, strike him as comelier than any he has seen since; but he is

the first to own that this may be only the enchantment of distant view. On the whole, he thinks the stage has improved rather than declined; and he has even his doubts as to whether the divine Garrick and Peg Woffington would be so much applauded now as they were in the last century, when sententious declamation was the fashion.

As it is not in the nature of Old Boys to cast any slur on the days of their youth, I think that Lord Lamatour's optimism respecting present times hangs upon a little personal circumstance. He was born a younger son, and during the first forty-five years of his life was comparatively poor; but fifteen years ago he came somewhat unexpectedly into the possession of his earldom, with a large rent-roll, and from that time the world began strewing flowers upon his path. He had always been a frequenter of play-houses, but his straitened circumstances would not allow of his associating with actors and actresses as he would have loved to do. The society of these persons is expensive; and not only that, but a needy young nobleman who mixes on terms of equality with his inferiors risks being treated with too much familiarity. With a *grand seigneur* the case is different. He can condescend without forfeiting his dignity, and be familiar without being paid back in the same coin. He is a patron of the drama, whose interest in the members of the profession is gratefully acknowledged as the symptom of a generous spirit.

Now Lord Lamatour had all his life aspired to play the Mæcenas in theatrical circles, and as soon as his means allowed him to do so he set about realising the dream with not less ardour than the youth of twenty who is admitted for the first time into a green-room. His advances were amiably welcomed. Actors are not coy, nor are actresses. A wealthy peer who is not prosy or straitlaced, and whose compliments to consummate talent are often paid in diamonds, is listened to with respect whenever he hazards an observation on the rendering of a part. His advice will be solicited before he gives it, and his pupils will strive to excel for his sake. Lord Lamatour's criticisms whispered behind the scenes were more potent than those of the enlightened censors who write for the press; and the tapping of his white-gloved hands in a stage-box was often more gratifying than the raptures of a whole audience. His lordship was soon known for a staunch patron of the stage, as open-handed as he was wise, and as indulgent as he was discri-

minate. He spent very large sums upon actresses but very little upon actors.

Imagine a tall and burly Old Boy, with a carefully-combed and perfumed white beard, a high-bridged nose, with a double eyeglass on it, and silvery curling hair parted down the middle. He dresses rather loudly, and in evening costume shows a great deal of shirt-front, with one large opal stud in the middle. He has always a full-blown rose or camellia in his button-hole, generally the gift of



some fair comedian ; and a sprinkle of white dust on his lapels and sleeves, as if he had run against a baker. This is the violet-powder which actresses use for their faces. How it comes upon Lord Lamatour's coat is no business of mine.

I have seen him in the *foyer* of the Grand Opera at Paris, surrounded by *coryphées*, who assailed him three deep. He bantered them in capital French. They rifled his pockets for sugar-plums ; one pulled his beard, another ran her fingers through his hair, a third slipped her photograph into his hand. I learned that it was



his habit to come to this *foyer* every night, and he was regarded as the Providence of the whole *corps de ballet*. He had distributed a good many hundred-franc notes among them, and had invited several to sup with him. When the call-boy summoned them on to the stage, they trooped off, blowing him kisses ; and when they returned, flushed and tired, from their dancing, he would order champagne from the refreshment-room, and gad about from one girl to the other, paying them pretty compliments all round while they sipped his health. The only regret of these young ladies was that the magnificent milord's visits to Paris were of such short duration. They promised to rear him a statue in sugar-candy if he would get himself naturalised a Frenchman ; but what would have become then of Lord Lamatour's English *protégées* ?

Apart from his philogynic proclivities, Lord Lamatour has a

real taste for the business of the stage, and keenly enjoys good dramatic literature. He has an eye for effect and a talent for suggesting situations. Younger peers, who have theatres of their own out of which they strive to make money, often ask his opinion about manuscripts that have been submitted to them; and he seldom makes a mistake in discerning whether the author has theatrical genius. A man may be a first-rate novelist and yet a very poor playwright, as he knows; and again, a man may possess the faculty of admiring French pieces without having the gift to adapt them for the British stage. Lord Lamatour has saved more than one manager from costly failures by indicating what are the points in an adapted piece which would not suit English tastes, and ought to be left out. Other managers, for not having listened to his advice, have repented too late.

His lordship has often been asked why he does not build and endow a theatre himself; but he is an eclectic, whose pleasure in roaming from house to house would be gone if he entered the trade, so to say, and identified himself with a special venture. He does not give his preference to any particular branch of the drama. He loves a leg-piece, and he delights in a well-acted Shakespearian tragedy. He may be seen at the Lyceum as often as at the Strand; and he will drive in the same evening from his box at the Court to his stall at either of the two opera-houses. To a shallow-witted person, who inquired of him whether he liked a melodrama as much as an operetta, he replied that this was like asking him whether he preferred roast beef to a strawberry ice. He enjoys both.

His eclecticism extends to the performers, whose merits he gauges with a rare good sense. He does not contrast one with another, but tests each player's doings by the standard of nature, and requires no more than that an actor or actress should do his or her best. He is so grateful to those who contribute to his pleasure that he always bestows unqualified praise on a sincere artistic effort; and though he exhibits no signs of impatience when things go wrong, those who are intimately acquainted with him soon perceive that no clumsy piece of acting ever escapes his eye. He does not like geese; and it has been noticed that, although he is profuse in his blandishments towards all feminine members of the profession, those whom he favours with solid proofs of his regard are the ones who have talent.

He has quite a paternal way of saying, 'You are making rapid

progress, my dear. A little more practice and you will touch perfection.' To some he has caused private lessons to be given at his expense; others have been sent by him to Paris, to study the best models at the Français and Gymnase; and to others, who, leading quiet lives, were unable to afford such gorgeous clothes as their flightier sisters, he has presented rich and tasteful costumes, that they might appear to their best advantage. So this is an Old Boy who will not have passed through this vale of tears to no purpose.

VII.

THE OLD BOY CRICKETER.

I PASS from Lord Lamatour to the cricket-field because I recollect having seen, some twenty years ago, an amateur performance at the Canterbury Theatre, all the actors being cricketers. It was during that bat-and-ball carnival held annually in Kent during August, and known as the Canterbury Week. Among the players that year was one who even then was pretty well stricken in years, and whose agility on the boards was as remarkable as his doings at the wicket. He had played in the three matches of the week, and had run up double scores in every innings, besides taking a few stumps and making some nimble catches. Nevertheless he had resolved upon retiring from public matches, because, said he, the cricket of these times was no more cricket according to his notions.

At the close of the last of those amateur performances at the theatre the veteran came before the curtain, dressed in the garb of a cricketer of fifty years ago, and sang, or rather growled, a comic song on the changes which had crept over the national game. He wore a black beaver hat, a white collar, and a satin stock, a striped cotton shirt and white ducks—no pads or gloves—and carried a narrow round-backed bat, which looked more like a magnified rolling-pin than like one of those smooth broad implements of cane or willow which batsmen handle nowadays. In his song he dealt some hard hits at the reckless slogging and the swift over-hand bowling which were then just settling into fashion; and these taunts at the young generation were enthusiastically applauded—

not because they were palatable, but because the singer was that doughty Old Boy, Lord Batmore.

His lordship had been in his prime in the days when Kent could beat all England with that mighty five—Felix, Wenman, Hillyer, Fuller Pilch, and Alfred Myun. Scores of a hundred were not common in those days, nor were wides and byes; and it would have made any of the five laugh aloud to see thirty and forty set down for extras, as one often can in these times of greased-lightning swifts. As bowling was under-hand then, and pitched straight for the wicket at a medium pace, the science of batting mostly consisted in defence. Runs off a slip were almost impossible, and a cut fetched three at the outside. Lord Batmore remembers the introduction of pads and gloves, which he long disdained as effeminate; and to the last he was one of those who wore but one pad and one glove. Perhaps he will live to see the day when batsmen will play with leathern brassards and fencing-masks, as he has often prophesied.

He married soon after retiring from the field, and begat sons and daughters, though, as above said, he was already well on in life. I saw him last year at Lord's, on the Eton and Harrow match-day, watching the exploits of a boy of his who wore the light-blue cap. He has three others at school, and the eldest, who plays for the University team, at Oxford. All these youngsters have of course adopted the modern tactics, and it was curious to watch the Old Boy, seated on one of the M.C.C. benches outside the Pavilion, and struggling between fatherly pride and professional disgust, as he saw young Batmore square his shoulders for one slog after another, without ever deigning to block. The Harrovian bowlers seemed to chuck the ball now at his legs, now at his head, now at the stomach of 'slip' or 'short-leg,' anywhere, in fact, but at the wicket; and young Batmore hit slashers now to the ropes, now to the Pavilion, now far beyond the telegraph.

One truly mammoth swipe cleared the whole ring of spectators and carriages, and sent the ball rebounding against the wall of the tennis-court, whereat the thousands of old and present Etonians on the ground broke into a hurricane of cheers. But the Old Boy, half smiling, half grumbling, vowed that a twister ought not to be punished like a long hop, and all this was fluking. At last a ball found its way by chance to the Etonian's middle stump, which it drove somersaulting a dozen yards behind the wicket-keeper, removing the latter's cap in the transit. 'There, I told you how it



"A MAMMOTH SWIPE.

would be!' exclaimed the Old Boy pathetically. But young Batmore had made more than a hundred, and was the hero of the day. He was one of those brilliant emulators of Mr. Thornton, whose scores alternate generally between duck's eggs and treble figures—bold spirits, always in extremes.

Now if old Lord Batmore has a principle which he cherishes, it is this, that a good cricketer ought to be 'safe for two dozen.' He inculcated this lesson on his brats when they first began to learn under him in their own Kentish park; and every time they come home for their holidays he puts them through their facings, asking them to block some of his antiquated slows if they can. They are good boys, and allow the old fellow to bowl them out easily, so that he may not think his hand out of gear; likewise when he himself stands to the wicket his two elders, who could splinter a two-inch plank at thirty yards, are careful to send him half volleys, which he puts away with judicious deliberation for twos and threes. Thus he still fancies himself equal to the best talent of the day; and, not noticing the humorous twinkle in the eyes of the dutiful lads when



THE HERO OF THE DAY.

he makes this boast, he asks them why it is they do not model their style upon his.

One of his favourite recreations is to go down to Eton during the summer, and watch the practice in the playing fields. The masters and boys all know him as one of the kindest Old Boys alive. With his white hat perched jauntily over his rubicund face, his white waistcoat, blue necktie, and white gaiters falling sprucely over his boots, he looks the incarnation of all that is jolly and neat. He takes his stand under the trees, criticizing the points of this and that new player, and is always listened to with respect, and even with some faith, by the members of the eleven whom his sons introduce to him.

But cricket is not like horseracing ; it has undoubtedly made a stride onwards, and the Old Boy is often quite wrong in underrating the difficulties of the new system of batting and bowling. If his sons tried to follow his lessons they would find themselves in as bad straits as a man with a flint-lock duelling with another holding a

Snider; and they would never gladden their parent's heart by sporting those blue caps, of which he is as proud as they.

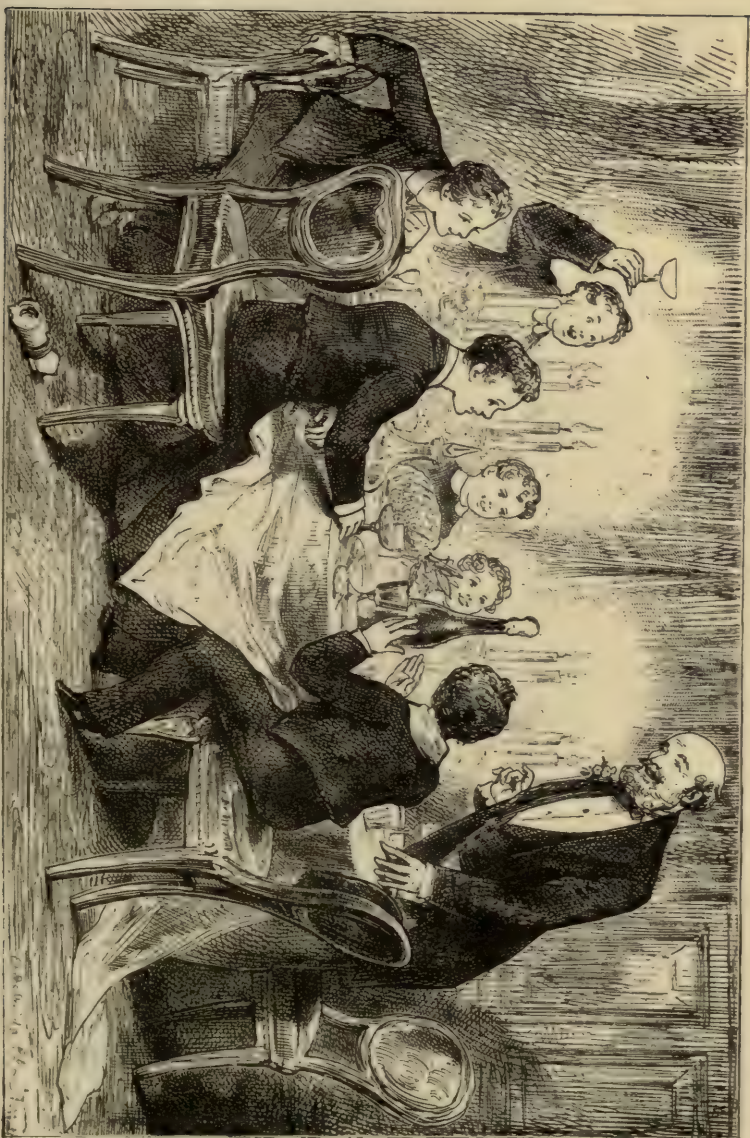
Cricket, which throws an Old Boy a great deal among young ones, is an honest pastime, softening the manners, and keeping the spirit at an even temperature of cheerfulness. It is rare to find a cricketer who is infirm of temper or dissolute in his morals. Lord Batmore is not only a jolly Old Boy; he is right-minded, gentle, and generous. See him at the White Hart at Windsor, surrounded by a parcel of boys whom he has invited to come and dine with him off ducks and peas and champagne-cup. How well he knows their tastes, and enters into their concerns, young ambitions, and cares! He talks to them in the language they understand, and wins their hearts long before he has administered the tips which seal him in their estimation as a regular brick. One could not augur well of a lad who failed in respect towards such a thoroughly good English gentleman as this veteran champion of the finest outdoor game which was ever invented to harden the muscles of natives and puzzle the understanding of foreigners.

VIII.

THE AGRICULTURAL OLD BOY.

I must go to Wales for my next type of Old Boy, not but that I could select as good a one nearer home; but Wales has preserved its language and local customs, so that Welsh squires exhibit characteristics not to be found among their English brethren. They are more rugged and patriarchal. In the northern part of the Principality they have preserved the Celtic type pure; they have red or flaxen polls and blue eyes; they are hospitable, and, when not offended, amiable; but it is easy to offend them, for their sensitiveness is as great as in the days when Shakespeare depicted all his Welshmen as men of cholerick mood.

We have come to witness a distribution of prizes after an agricultural show at a place whose name is difficult to spell, though we may call it Crwllm, leaving the purist to throw in an extra *w* or two if it suits him. The judges are seated on a red platform, with a show of silver tankards and medals before them. They are a fine



LORD BATHMORE AND THE ETON BOYS.



THE AGRICULTURAL OLD BOY.

“He accepts their homage as his due, and stalks among them with a head some inches taller than theirs.”

collection of greybeards, with clear-cut features and firm chins, that could not well be matched for manliness; but they are waiting for a better man than them all, Sir Evan Jones, the squire of the district, who has not yet arrived. Here he comes! and see how all rise to make way for the Old Boy, who is older than the oldest by ten years, though his hair is but iron-hued. He accepts their homage as his due, and stalks among them with a head some inches higher than theirs, addressing one of them as 'young man,' and another as 'my boy.' Then he takes the chair, and proceeds to make two speeches—the one in English for the gentry, the other in rough Gaelic for the peasantry at the far end of the room, to whom he speaks as if they were his children. Sir Evan is, in fact, near his eightieth year, but comes of the stubborn Silurian race, whom time cannot subdue without a long struggle. His face was olive-tinted, and it is now bronzed; his hair was once like polished ebony, and it now resembles the same wood unpolished and seasoned. His manner is more soft and courteous than that of a young man; but even if he lives another ten years he will probably retain the elastic spirits and the ready acceptance of novelties which entitle him to the name of boy.

He was only a boy when he begged his father to buy him sixty acres of marsh and two of rock that were lying idle on the other side of the 'river.' In North Wales anything is a river. The father, half in sport, acceded to his request, wondering what would come of it. Evan's first year's rent was a goose, from a rustic who pastured there his downy flock. There was laughter when the juvenile proprietor handled a carving-knife for the first time, and was asked whether he meant to lease all his acres on goose tenure; and so there is laughter now, but of another sort, when he points to his orchard, his belt of oaks, and the thorn-trees in his horse-pastures, saying, in blunt style, 'I have worked there, man and boy, for sixty years, and ye see the result of it.'

He is so intensely fond of the place that he seldom leaves it. Just to try what the land could do, he has gained successively almost every prize that the country gives for plant or beast; but his real pride is in his men. He is never tired of telling how three of the fellows beat six rick-burners who were being paid to destroy all the hay in two counties. At first sight you would think that his whole heart lay in his land, so proud he is of his own breed of cobs, formed by careful selection from Powisland ponies and Arabs newly imported:

so grandly he answers your praises of anything about his house, from the carpets to the cheeses: 'All home made.' In common conversation the Old Boy seems to grow more and more rustic at every subject that is mentioned. Talk to him of travel, he answers, 'What, go and find all countries worse than my own, and then come back to find my own home worse than I left it? There never was a more lovely spot than Trefachgen; and then what would my people do if I left them? As to change of air, I am continually in the air, and the air is always changing. The scenery changes too, as you would soon see if you knew it as well as I do. Change of society? When I want to see more people I invite them, and they come fast enough if there's dinner on the table. As for those who live here, I never grow tired of them.'

This is how Sir Evan Jones speaks. His views of business are old-world views; he will not be a magistrate, because his people and the neighbours listen with respect to his friendly arbitration, while they would be nearly sure to grumble at the very same decisions if given from the Bench. 'What do I know of law?' he asks. 'Outside Trefachgen people do as they please, inside it they do as I please. That is my idea of law.'

Ask him if he sells game, and he says, 'No; I never learned the trade, and I leave it to those who have to live by it. I can sell live animals, but not dead meat.' Once, when he was selling one of his far-famed cobs, the purchaser hinted at 'a month on trial.' He seemed to think he was bargaining for a sewing-machine. Sir Evan seldom lost his temper, but the insult then was too strong for him. In the language of his childhood, on which he fell back when excited (for those Welshmen are great swearers), he thundered forth, 'Siaced a llofrau! is a month's trial a test for a Trefachgen four-year-old? Take the brute, and try him for twenty years; if he breaks down under fair treatment, I'll give you another for nothing!' The man shook his ears as if they had been cuffed, and apologised.

But with all his love for his bachelor home—for he has never taken a wife—the squire of Trefachgen has a heart none the less for relatives and family friends. He cannot be kept long from servants of his own training and cattle of his own rearing, nor, as he calls them, 'his home-brewed plantations;' but he pays visits of three days at a time to many houses in the neighbourhood. There is no railway near him; and if there were, he would only use it to provide employment for his tenants' sons. For pleasure he would

travel by road ; and when he fares forth on business he travels over his own fields. He says pleasantly that his fields are his bankers ; they give him good interest, and do not run away with his capital.

So when he strolls about he thoroughly enjoys himself : every neighbour welcomes him ; and if he have one amusement that pleases him more than others, it is to attend all the weddings in the county. For these occasions he dons a curious blue coat, with gilt buttons, and a grey beaver hat, with long fur, which stands up on end at the least breath of wind ; likewise his gala snuff-box of gold—for he is an inveterate snuff-taker, and delights to pass his rappee among young men and maidens, to make them sneeze. Of a facetious spirit, he delivers appropriate speeches at wedding-breakfasts, and he gives abundance of presents suited to every style of housekeeping. Jewellery, silks, and gewgaws are not in his line ; and he plainly tells brides with a tendency to young-ladyism that, if they cannot make puddings and cheese, milk the cow, and groom the cob at a pinch, their bridegrooms will have made a bad bargain in marrying them. The Old Boy has the privilege of saying and doing much as he pleases : if he have eccentricities, his good qualities more than redeem them ; and if he ever had serious faults, he has fought against them so long that they are not easily discovered in him now. He has been urged by his admirers to enter upon a more public life—for admirers generally push one to do the wrong thing ; but he refuses, saying that he knows well enough on what scale he is built, that, in his little place, he feels that he is master, but among greater men he would be lost.

Certainly he looks a little lost when he comes up to London now and then, at very rare intervals, to see relatives who have settled in town, and have grown too infirm to travel into Wales. He alights at odd out-of-the-way hotels in Holborn or the City, which were renowned in the coaching days. Here his early hours confound boots and the chambermaid, for he is afoot by five o'clock in the summer ; and, finding no shops open at that hour—to his great disgust—trudges off to Covent Garden, and breakfasts at one of the taverns near that market which open very early in the morning for the accommodation of carters and salesmen. The odd hours between breakfast and nine o'clock, when tradesmen begin to take down their shutters, he devotes to long rambles through the empty streets, and he picks up quite a mass of information about the topography of the big town. As he has a capital memory, and can



THE AGRICULTURAL OLD BOY.

recollect where such and such a house or street stood in old days, his walks afford him subjects for rumination on the destructive tendencies of metropolitan improvements; but he is never at a loss to find his way, having a shrewd faculty for divining why this or that new thoroughfare was pierced and whither it must naturally lead.

Sir Evan belongs to no club, and despises cabs. Availing himself of his stay in town to make wholesale purchases of such things as cannot easily be procured in Wales, he tramps about all day, with a gingham under one arm and a sheaf of parcels under the other. When hungry, he turns into an eating-house, and lunches off two chops and a pint of port. In the evening, having walked about twenty-five miles in the course of his day's wander-

ings, he dines with his friends, sits telling them anecdotes till ten o'clock, and then walks back to his hotel, without an overcoat or comforter. He has never owned such luxuries; he has never lain abed later than six; and he has never been ill except once, when he broke his leg at the age of sixty, from being thrown off a cob which had been frightened by one of those accursed steam-ploughs, which one of his neighbours had set up, to the shame of good husbandry.

I am concerned to add that this excellent gentleman makes but a sparing use of baths, such womanish things not having yet been advocated on sanitary grounds when he was a boy. Once when he had caught a chill in London a doctor advised him to try a Turkish bath, and he repaired to the Hammam in Jermyn-street; but he had no sooner penetrated into the sudarium than he strode out again, laughing and swearing at the oafishness of men who baked themselves like potatoes for amusement. He took a header into the plunge-bath like a boy, and there was an end of his chill.

IX.

THE WICKED OLD BOY.

I WOULD rather write of good Old Boys than of bad; but I must call attention to a very slippery kind of old fish who leads captive silly little minnows of the other sex. His name is the Honourable Mr. Spink, but he is better known at the clubs as old Pinkie, and will answer to that appellation when apostrophised by dukes and other pleasant people of a standing superior to his. He is a Wicked Old Boy, and no mistake, who dyes his hair and keeps a glass permanently screwed in his eye, the better to ogle women with. One of the best dressed men in London, of course, for lady-killers must make personal adornment a study. His coats, boots, and gloves are things to see; but his hats transcend all description. He is said to possess Lord Hardwicke's recipe for keeping them always glossy; but others say that he buys a new hat every week.

He was a gay young man ever so long ago, and old men hopefully waited to see him become grave, but they waited in vain.

Two things might have sobered him—a sudden loss of property, or a business-like wife; but though he often ran into debt, and never had loose cash except on the day of winning a bet, he did not so far ruin his fortune as to have any stimulus to work. He would say, ‘I must retrench;’ but an insinuating tradesman would book an order, a captivating mistress would extract a promise, or a light-hearted comrade would lead him off on some pleasurable expedition, and so the retrenchment was put off. Perhaps he mortgaged or borrowed, but he did it so discreetly that the world did not know it and his reputation for wealth made him a favourite among the women. They talked of his fine face and figure, of his taste and accomplishments, of the charm of his manner. But a poor man may have all these advantages without being interesting; and the points that really weighed in his favour were his brougham, always at some friend’s disposal; his opera-box, so excellent an excuse for little suppers; and the bouquets, for which his valet advanced the cash, and for every two that his master had really bought, claimed payment for three at the end of the quarter.

People used to set down Pinkie as dissipated, and excused him on account of his youth; but when he attained middle life he was a confirmed rake, as most women suspected, and many knew for certain. A young lady, a truer friend than most, who had been able to withstand his wiles, and who saw that he had some good in him, tried to improve it; but he was spoiled by the flattery of other women, and did not catch at the opportunity of making a good match. It was from this time that his name was heard in connection with actresses; and though he had never compromised a woman in society, and the ladies liked him as well as ever, their husbands began to be a little uneasy if he paid them frequent visits. Then, after a few years more, the husbands ceased to be afraid at all. This was when, comparing the date of Pinkie’s nativity with their own, they decided that he must have passed the age when men are dangerous; but he was more dangerous than he had ever been, precisely because he was less watched, and because women were less on their guard against him.

Men took Pinkie for a shallow fellow, but he was not. Ladies’ men have winning qualities, tact, and a great deal of assurance. They must be pleasant talkers, considerate, and unassuming; they must have a clear perception of the objects they have in view, and a dexterous use of their means. It may not suit them to

try and seduce all women, but they must show all that they think them worth courting, else they will arouse implacable resentments. A man who has a reputation for rakishness becomes the cynosure of women's eyes, and must keep up his character for seductiveness under pain of bringing contempt, not on himself only, but on all the fair creatures he is said to have defeated. The number of these is always exaggerated. So are the fascinations of the victor.

It is a trying time for an old buck past his prime when he is introduced into a new house, and is aware that the hostess is intently surveying him to see what 'women can possibly have found to admire in such a creature.' He must have a deft compliment ready then to disarm the fair critic's prejudices at one stroke, and to force her into doing mental homage to his worth. 'Men,' said Lord Chesterfield, 'receive a man according to his coat, and take leave of him according to his merit.' Women receive a man according to his face, and take leave of him according to his speech. Wilkes used to say that it took him half an hour's conversation to obliterate the impression which his ugly features produced; but he did obliterate it, and was a favourite with women. No man can attain to this position if he is a commonplace churl.

But he must not be too sincere a lover of women either, else his heart will be pulled into fragments. He must know their weaknesses the better to play upon them; and be wary of exciting a passion when he would merely rouse a whim. Fire is only dangerous when it masters control, and it is the same with love. The woman who would make a jealous fury, if her passions be set boiling, may become a most agreeable *bonne amie* if nothing be done to heat her feelings above a genial warmth. The art of seduction is, after all, the art of amusing; and the true rake works upon a woman's senses, not upon her heart and soul.

More women are won by smiles than by sighs. The light banter, the soft compliment, the show of constant kindness, and above all the opportunity which makes the thief,—these make also the Lothario. Nor let it be forgotten that the measure of the rake's success is but that of Society's morals. Resist the man and he will withdraw, for he dislikes pitched battles and arduous sieges. His is the strategy which works a way into the citadel by insidious processes, by treason, or by sudden stormings, effected at a time when the assailant knows that the garrison is half-willing to capitulate.

If the rake undertakes a long siege, it is one of patience, which resembles those affairs of old, when the two armies showed great mutual courtesy, and only exchanged shots at precise intervals and according to chivalrous rules—sieges which were conducted more with a view to killing time, or for the purpose of masking other military operations, than in the hope of conquest. Nevertheless, it is to be noticed that as with fortified towns so with women—the combatant who lets herself be besieged generally ends by surrendering.

Our friend Pinkie was never in love, neither was he anxious that women should fall in love with him. Their friendship was all he cared for, and he sedulously watched over the reputation of women who would have compromised themselves from inexperience had he let them have their heads. He was a perfect tutor in the art of keeping oneself unspotted before the world. A grateful look, a gentle squeeze of the hand, were the only acknowledgments he made of intimate favours he had received; and women who trembled to meet him before third parties, fearing lest something in his manner should betray the understanding that existed between them, were soon set at their ease.

He was not one of those foolish pernicious fellows who cock their heads arrogantly after a *bonne fortune*, and think themselves entitled to treat a mistress with cavalier familiarity. On the contrary, he displayed the greater respect towards a woman from the moment when she had lost her own. In this way he insured respect for himself. It is by unmanly slights and neglect that a woman is driven into doing wild things, which open the eyes of husbands and lead to proceedings in the Divorce Court; but the bonds which tied Pinkie to his Dulcineas were floral garlands, not iron chains, and they could be broken without effort when it suited either of the parties.

Pinkie never quarrelled with a woman, and retained her undiminished regard for years, after all flirting had ceased between them. Sometimes it would happen that a lady who had gone far—very far—with him would subsequently repent, and lead an exemplary life of religious puritanism. Then Pinkie would show his tact by keeping altogether aloof from her, so that he might not revive burning memories. If he met her by chance he would do nothing to attract recognition; if she addressed him, he would answer with a deferential bow; if she was alluded to in his pre-

sence he would speak of her in terms of reverence as a pattern of all the virtues. Impossible to be more socially correct than Pinkie.

The old buck is as active as ever with his tight boots and speckless gloves. There is no guessing his age from his appearance, for he pads and rouges himself like an old *traviata*. He has splendid teeth, which are false, and beautiful curly grey hair, most of which is false likewise, but so artistically blended with his own that its falseness cannot be detected. Had he been less wise he would have dyed his hair black or brown; but he holds that a man ought not to try and take more than a quarter of a century from his age, and he is content to pass for forty-five, being in fact very near seventy. Occasionally he powders his hair; but as his face is completely shaven this does not age him, but makes him look younger and fresher. He might revive the fashion of powder, if he got some other Old Boys as healthy and good-looking as himself to imitate him.

He has all the personal daintiness which women love; everything about him is of the finest quality, pleasant to the eye and touch. He has chambers in the Albany, which are luxurious as an actress's boudoir, and a river-side villa at Taplow, where he gives little garden-parties or Sunday dinners during the summer. Being very careful in his diet, Pinkie has preserved his digestion unimpaired; and as he is regular in taking daily exercise, his nerves and muscles are in capital condition. Somebody whom he can trust buys him handsome hacks of docile temper, which he rides in Rotten Row, cutting a very pretty figure of a dignified horseman, as even young and horsey bucks are fain to acknowledge.

The Old Boy's privilege of addressing a young woman as 'my dear' to her husband's face gives him a great advantage. The husband sees no harm in it, nor does he grow uneasy when the Old Boy brings presents of flowers, opera-boxes, and envied cards for such-and-such a party in Belgrave Square. He makes bets of gloves, and, having lost them, there can be no objection to his taking the measure of the fair winner's hand, and paying her a compliment on its prettiness. At the opera he helps his fair guest to take off her cloak and put it on, and she finds that he does this in a much more attentive way than her husband. There is an affectionate fatherliness in his manner of recommending her not to catch cold, and his hands are busy drawing the folds closer round her, and covering up her *décolletée* throat. It is the same when he packs



her in the carriage, and draws the fur rug over her knees. Women like to be petted, fondled, pampered; and who can do this better than an Old Boy acting with a seductive purpose?

When the moment for declaring himself comes, Pinkie has generally got the turtle-dove in his power. Between astonishment and sensual emotion she drops, as the bird does, under the fascination of the snake. She is afraid to appeal to her husband; it would seem too absurd that she should need protection against an

old man, of age to be his grandfather. Husbands are very unreasonable in such cases: they fly out, accuse their wives of having given thoughtless encouragement; or, worse still, they disbelieve the story, and say, 'How can you be so silly as to impute designs to an old man with white hair? You must have been mistaken, and will render us both ridiculous if you are so prudish.' The fear of ridicule is often worse than the fear of shame, and women fall the more easily into dangers which they are afraid to confess.

Then generous men, like Pinkie, are such valuable friends, that it is impolitic, and sometimes perilous, to fall out with them. The Old Boy often prefaces his amatory enterprises by a loan of money to the husband, or by privately paying the wife's debts when he has seen her in low spirits about a milliner's bill. In doing this he said, 'Don't let your husband know anything of this, my dear. Pretty women must have pretty dresses; and Old Boys, like me, who have plenty of spare guineas, are the proper persons to provide them. Now, not a word, I beg, or else I shall think you don't look upon me as a friend,' All this is charming; but when the hour of trial arrives, the turtle-dove's first thought is, that if she dismisses Pinkie with indignation, that loan of money will have to be repaid, after a tearful avowal to the husband, which the latter will not like, and may remember bitterly all his days.

Financing plays as great a part in high-life seduction as it does in low; and the balance which the old rake keeps at his banker's is the necessary ammunition for his warfare against the other sex. But I repeat, Pinkie is a wicked Old Boy; and if some day one should hear of his being sharply chastised by some husband more wide awake than is usual, I shall not be distressed overmuch.

X.

THE CLERICAL OLD BOY.

My pious friend Lord Soberley, whose thoughts are intent upon ecclesiastical business, is not a bishop or an archdeacon, but only a layman, who began late in life to court the society of the clergy, to talk with them of their work, and even to hint at an inclination

towards joining their ranks. Of his taking this last step there is little danger; for though Lord Soberley's character is thoroughly good and his zeal great, his knowledge of theology is too superficial to bear the test of a bishop's examination. He read the Bible but little in his youth, and when his musings began to take a serious turn, he flattered himself that he knew much more of that book than he really does. He can apply a scriptural quotation with considerable effect to the events of daily life; but he would be puzzled to quote chapter and verse in support of the Thirty-nine Articles.

A Positivist having once endeavoured to prove to him that many of the Christian legends (as he called them) were grafted on mythology, his lordship sat aghast, and had to back out of the wordy war for lack of ammunition. A young curate, to whom he mentioned this distressing matter subsequently, told him where the arguments might be found wherewith to rout the free-thinker; but unfortunately it was then too late, and besides Lord Soberley has not much time for reading.

While some make it their boast that they are ready to uphold the Church but not the clergy—which is, by-the-bye, just as though they were to say that they believe in medicine but not in doctors—Lord Soberley, on the contrary, is more concerned about the clergy than about the Church. He is regular in his attendance at the May meetings, sitting in a prominent place on the platform at Exeter Hall, and having always something to say. He proudly points to himself as a specimen of the friendly feeling between the nation and the Establishment, and he fights the Liberationists with weapons of grave sarcasm. He is not so afraid of a Dissenter as of a Positivist; for the ignorance of the Jumping sects generally equals their violence, while their violence is apt to give way in presence of a lord.

The clergy do not like Lord Soberley, though. He is too meddlesome and too strict. He is a Churchman without being a Sacerdotalist; and whilst he would delight to see every parish rector and his curate well paid, he would not give them authority over our souls and bodies, through the confessional, as the new school of Ritualists would desire. He calls himself a Protestant—a name held in execration at St. Albans, Holborn, and St. James's, Hatcham. He once thought himself a High Churchman, because he approved of choral services and the wearing of a surplice in the pulpit; but the priests of the Church Union, with their chasubles,

copes, incense-pots, and crucifixes, have got far beyond him. He cannot understand their drift, nor they his bewilderment.

He talks of the glorious Reformation; they say 'Pish!' and call Henry VIII. and Luther a pair of unclean fellows, who played fast and loose with religion for matrimonial ends. Lord Soberley gets as many ugly knocks from partisans of Messrs. Dale, Tooth, and Mackonochie as from Nonconformists and heretics; and out of the half-dozen clerical journals extant four are constantly sneering at him as the 'lay Pope.'

He is clerical in appearance, for he wears black clothes and a white tie, and is unctuous even in his familiar discourse. He alludes to himself as a miserable sinner, and exhorts people whom he meets in railway-carriages to be on their guard against the Evil One. His lectures at mechanics' institutes and such places partake rather of the nature of sermons than of addresses, and might make his hearers yawn but for the fact that he purchases his right to be prosy by very liberal donations towards all charitable objects. He is a founder of coffee-taverns, and working-men's clubs conducted on temperance principles. He takes fallen women in hand, and is an amateur inspector of reformatories.

Generally chosen to sit on Royal Commissions appointed for some philanthropic purpose, he draws up the exhaustive reports which are submitted to Parliament, and which form the basis of legislation as to pauperism or drunkenness. He is of course a rigid Sabbatarian, and cannot view the sale of beer, or even the opening of Museums, on Sundays without horror. He is also inclined to sympathize with all sentimental movements—anti-vivisection, anti-bellicose, and so forth—and attends the meetings convoked in their favour, though less often to offer a new suggestion than with the vague idea of 'supporting the chair,' even though the chair can support itself perfectly well.

The idea of supporting persons and resolutions is rooted in Lord Soberley's nature. He comes more and more to believe that he is quite necessary to the well-being of every good man and to the success of every good work. Knowing that he does all he can, he cannot conceive how little is that all. If asked to join a new association, he weighs his answer carefully before adding so important a personage as himself to its patrons (even though he may have been minded to join it all along); and if an old institution offends him, he looks upon his own withdrawal as the bitterest vengeance that

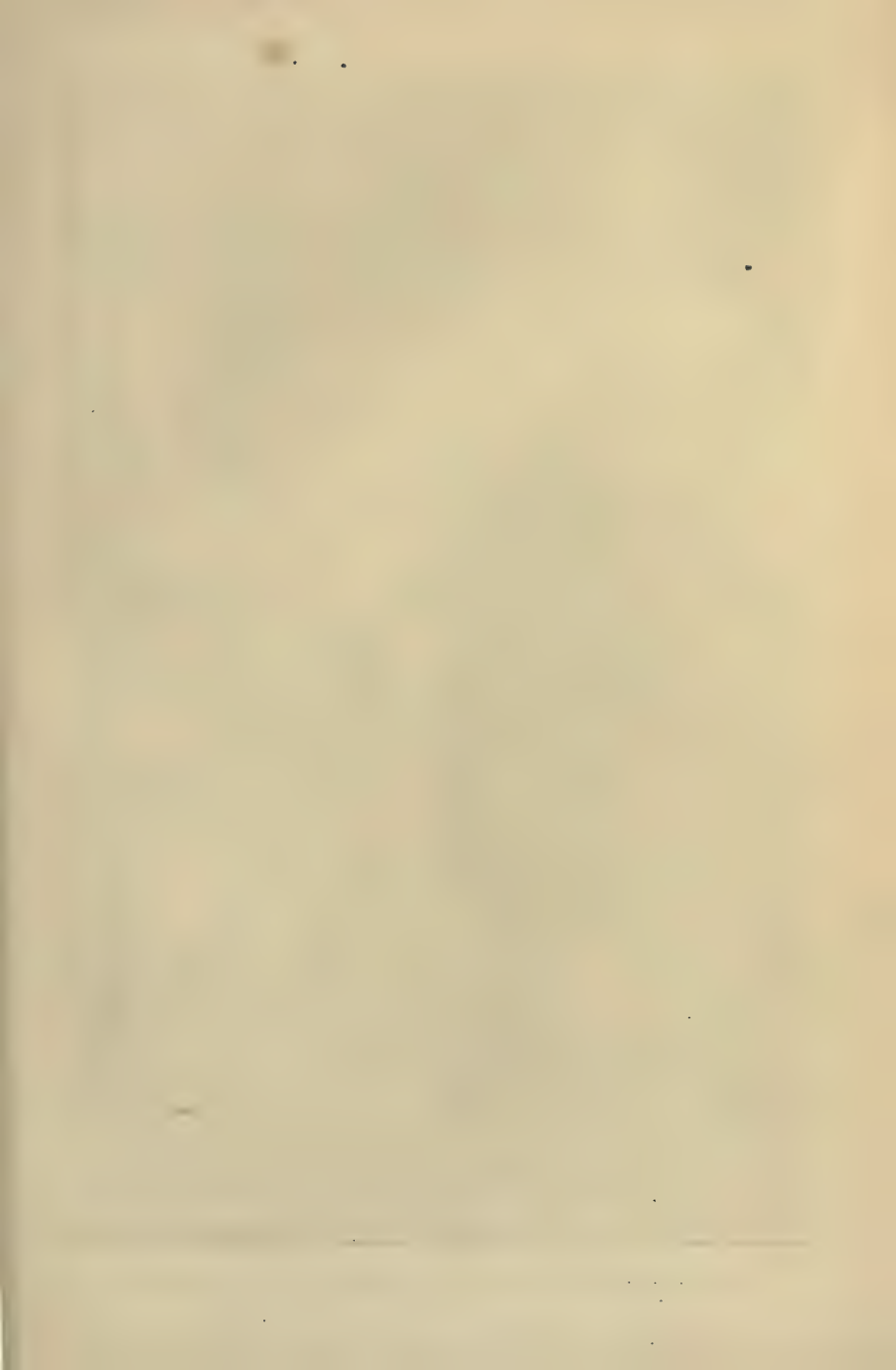
can be taken. His views are generally sensible, but he is strangely unable to sympathize with those of others. Why cannot they think as he thinks and do as he does? Why are not all young people brought up as they were in his time? So, with the most benevolent intentions and with the mildest manners, the pious old gentleman is really a tyrant.

As is natural, he encounters least opposition in his own parish church. His family built the church (in consideration, *entre nous*, of some abbey-lands), therefore of course he must legislate for it. The bishop is the patron; but he has under two bishops succeeded in nominating the rectors. Sometimes a bishop, divided between two or three candidates of equal merit, is glad of an expression of opinion from a prominent layman; and it is certainly best that squire and parson should be agreed. But our Old Boy's idea of agreement is that the parson should agree with *him*.

There is a pew in the chancel which my lord never uses, preferring the nave; but if a stranger ventures into it he incurs the owner's wrath; and when the parson asked that he might put his choir there, and let the gallery fall down, as it threatened to do, Lord Soberley's astonishment was too deep for words. But he repaired the gallery handsomely and presented new hymn-books, for even his refusals are given in lordly style. On a question of extra services, his reply was: 'What do the people want with them? I don't want them. Well, well, let them have the service, if they want it;' and again he muttered, 'but I don't want it.'

This slight ostentation and selfishness are, however, only the results of the Old Boy's having so many toadies, who persuade him that he is the main prop of the Church. In his parish he is consulted as much as the rector; and it is no wonder if some of the poor folk should think him to be in orders, for he reads the lessons in church on Sundays, as laymen are privileged to do. Standing at the lectern, his style is florid and showy, contrasting much with his earnest simplicity in reading family prayers at home; for Lord Soberley is truly a good man, and trains his household in ways of piety. His butler, coachman, and footmen are all steady-going religionists, and his servant-girls put their wages into the savings-bank.

As to my lord's relatives, the only condition on which they can obtain his good graces is being well reported of for a godly manner of living. He is no friend to young men who waste their time in dissipation, and young women who exhibit themselves with bare





LORD SOBERLEY BEING PILOTED THROUGH SUNDAY SCHOOL.

busts, and think it no sin to waltz and drink champagne all through the night, and every night throughout the season. Having been wild himself in his younger days, if reports speak truly, 'Lord Soberley is now the more particular in insisting that social amusements sow the seeds of much after-remorse.

The last time I saw him he was being piloted through a Sunday-school by a pretty niece of his, whom he had converted, and who, eschewing gay dresses and fluffy poodle curls, had taken to attiring herself in modest stillness and unadorned drabs. I suspect the sly puss will have no cause to regret her transformation; for they say her uncle will dower her handsomely when she marries, and leave her the bulk of his fortune when he dies.

XI.

THE OLD BOY RECLUSE.

LORD Grooge belongs to the category of eccentrics; they form a large body, and some of them are really worth knowing. I here use eccentricity in its primitive signification, as meaning manners that stand outside the ordinary customs of mankind. An eccentric is a man whose ways are a little odd, not necessarily one who is slightly crazed.

I know an Old Boy, bearded, grave-looking, and absent-minded, whose life is passed methodically in his own house. He is married, but without children; he does not know how many servants he has, nor what are their names; every man is addressed by him as John, and every woman as Mary. He is rich, he has a title, being the younger brother of a duke, and I may call him Lord Thomas Cheerwell.

It is Lady Thomas who rules my lord's establishment by his desire; he sanctions all that she does; he welcomes the guests whom she invites, and cheerfully accompanies her when she takes him out; but he never proposes to her that they should give or receive any visits. So entirely does he rely on her, that when he is asked about his health he is sometimes heard to reply, 'Pretty well, thank you; am I not, my dear?' In the afternoons he is at the disposal of everybody, and has a fund of amusing conversation on almost all



topics; but whether at home or abroad he has one unvarying way of employing his mornings; and if, by any chance, he may not spend his evenings in his own way, he is quite wretched. His two hobbies are history and whist.

No matter who may be in his house, or in whose house he may be, he prefers to breakfast alone; then he takes a little turn in the garden, and nothing pleases him better than to wear a shabby dressing-gown and a cotton cap by way of a hint that he does not wish to talk to any one just then. For precisely three hours, not a minute more nor less, he locks his door and writes his great work, of which every page has been already written twice over. It is called *Unknown Anecdotes of Well-known Men*. No one but himself has seen a line of it; not even his idolised wife. The old editions are burned in the study grate, and the current edition is kept in a despatch-box, with a Bramah lock. Once he lost the key from his

bunch, and passed two hours in feverish anxiety, calling loudly upon every John and Mary to come and help him in his search, yet interrupting himself every minute to say tenderly to his wife, 'My dear, don't trouble yourself; it is not worth the while.'

At last a maid brought the key to her mistress, who took it to its owner. He could hardly have welcomed a lost child with more rapture; and the servants concluding that there must be some very precious stones in the despatch-box, there was much babbling about it in the kitchen. A few days later (it may have been only a coincidence) some burglars broke into the house; and the papers announced that Lady Thomas Cheerwell had been the victim of a great jewel robbery. But the thieves had only made off with Lord Thomas's boxful of manuscript, which they honestly returned after a short while, when his lordship, disregarding the law as to the compounding of felonies, had publicly offered one hundred pounds for its restoration.

Lord Thomas's book will be good, for he makes a very careful selection of his matter. He says that the whole art of history consists in selecting. The great historians always did this; in the pre-historic period the mistake was made of recording nothing; ours is the post-historic age, when the equal mistake is made of omitting nothing. You may talk of the possible advantage of allowing the next generation to select its facts, and argue that there cannot be too much chronicling, seeing that little events are often the beginnings of important movements. But Lord Thomas is not fond of arguing, and will challenge you to meet him in the evening at whist.

He is a first-rate player; but if your taste in the noble game be not equal to his, you will see, with some little dread, the preparations made, after dinner, for a long sitting. Big logs of pear-wood are piled on the fire; the historian's high-backed chair is wheeled into the drawing-room, and the footstool is carried after it. Two little brass kettles appear; and tea-cups are upon one side-table, while glasses and case-bottles figure on another. The host, while shuffling his pack of cards, breaks out into story-telling, and holds forth much in this style:

'When I was young we really played whist. In the winter, as soon as there was no more daylight, we sat down to dinner; then we fell to cards, and often played till morning. Sometimes the fire would go out, and we sat and played in coats and rugs; or between

two deals we would warm ourselves with leap-frog. It was little we spent on bedroom candles. I was not married then. One night, I remember, it was freezing hard, and the fire was out. We went forth in the dark for our cloaks, and heard a queer noise, which made us go back to the card-room and fetch each a candle. There were two swords hanging up in the hall, and we took them down to be prepared for emergencies. But we found the noise came from a sheep-dog, who had got shut in by accident. We showed him the way to the front door; but our luck wasn't over, for the wind blew out two of our candles. Then young Larkins (who is Judge Larkins now) blew out the other two for a joke, which put us in a fix; for there were no lucifer-matches then, and we couldn't lay hands on the tinder-box. We groped our way to bed as we could, heaping curses on Larkins while doing so, and locked our doors for fear of further mischief.

'In the morning the cards and stakes were lying loose on the table, and near them stood some half-empty glasses of punch (we seldom left 'em so, by the way); but the hall-door was open, too, and just inside it were the extinguished candles and two swords. The story went round that a duel had been fought, that the survivors had fled; and a maid had heard a dog howl, which is a sure sign of death. At about ten o'clock there was a little crowd of villagers, looking in at the window to see us all four breakfasting together; and we had to howl to the beggars to prove that we were really alive. Aha! capital joke! That will do, John; set down the kettles. And now, young man, the cards are made. Will you cut to my wife?'

The Old Boy has a hundred such stories, which will always make his wife laugh, for they are an attached couple. All through the evening, between deals, the Old Boy keeps quoting Lawrence, Crawley, Hoyle, Cavendish, and Bob Short, besides a host of players with whom he is personally acquainted, and who have enunciated some useful maxims for the guidance of whist-players. With all his geniality he cannot refrain from remonstrances with his guests who have not carried out his notions of what is prudent. When he has got as far as saying, 'Let me, just out of curiosity, ask on what principle you played that card?' his wife interrupts him with tea or grog and music.

When he and his guests separate for the night he makes amends for his dogmatism by saying that without some help one

can never learn whist, and that he himself is much indebted to his elders for his skill in the game—that it is a noble game of which you never get tired, and which you are never too old to play. He then shows some wooden blocks, which he has himself designed, and from which, when the set is complete, he promises to print packs of cards for the blind. The inability of these persons to play whist has always struck him as the hardest part of their fate; for life without whist seems to Lord Thomas Cheerwell like a dinner without wine, or a ball without women.

I have known many good whist-players, but never one who had such a surprising memory as old Tom. He will often wind up a game by telling the three players what is the last card which each holds in his hand. If that eminent French whist-player, Count Daru, knew of old Tom, he would certainly cross the Channel to have a rubber with him; but the Englishman would hardly reciprocate the compliment, for he cannot bring himself to leave his own house except at his wife's request. He shows himself so little in society that many persons doubtless think he is dead, and would be surprised how healthy and jolly he looks, notwithstanding the life of voluntary monotony which he leads. He is a recluse who reminds one somewhat of a prior in one of those mediæval monasteries, who lived subject to no rule but that of enjoying themselves in quiet.

XII.

THE SHABBY OLD BOY.

LAST night, as I was dining at the club, old Lord Grooge walked in, and went his customary round of the tables. I have never seen him pay for a dinner of his own, and suspect that he would make his evening meal off a biscuit if he did not find some hospitable soul ready to entertain him. He generally does, for the honour of feeding a lord is worth paying for a dinner. Lord Grooge sniffs the fumes of joints as if he were inhaling fresh air in the middle of a field. He takes up the bill of fare as if he were going to order something; then he looks round, to see if there be any person of

his acquaintance among the diners. When there is not he goes out, and returns later. He may do this several times, but at last he is pretty sure to sight somebody whom he knows to be good-natured, and whom he accosts with gushing friendliness. 'How



d'ye do? Glad to see you looking so well. Dining, I see. Salmon, my favourite dish. I wonder whether there is any left in the kitchen? Waiter says there isn't. Ah, I've had a bracing walk to-day. I should have liked a bit of salmon.'

By this time the good-natured man has made a sign to the waiter to bring another plate and fork, and he has requested Lord

Grooge to do him the favour to share his meal. Lord Grooge accepts, and makes himself agreeable, so that he may be invited again on some subsequent occasion. In pursuance of the same object, he refrains from accepting any offer of expensive wines, but contents himself with the sherry or beer of which his host may be partaking. His main point is to get a dinner gratis as often as possible; and this could not be if his presence added a guinea or so to the bill. He must run softly who would run long.

Lord Grooge is miserably poor. His father, who had squandered the family estate, left him without visible means of subsistence, by which I mean that the poor fellow was as devoid of brains as of money. I do not know whence he draws the 300*l.* a year which is said to be his income; and but for the fact that tradesmen must be aware of his impecuniousness, I should think that he had no income at all, but lived on debts. He is deplorably shabby. His hat has a rim of grease above the band; a pint of oil could be boiled out of his coat-collar; and his boots are worn down at the heels.

He has a pinched and hungry expression, and it is painful to see his nervousness when any project is mooted before him which might lead to his being asked for a subscription. He never takes a cab, and even when it is pouring cats and dogs makes his way on foot from his sordid bedroom in Mount-street to his club. I have seen him sorely troubled at having to give a gratuity to a lad who had brought him a telegram. He extracted a paperful of copper money from his trousers-pocket, and grudgingly counted out three-pence. Perhaps this largesse upset his budget for the whole week; he certainly looked as if it had bled him cruelly.

If it be true that Lord Grooge have 300*l.* a year, his shabbiness must be taken as a proof of that ignorance of the science of money-spending which is a peculiarly English failing. An old French nobleman would not looked starved if he had 7500 francs a year to spend on himself. He would contrive to be well dressed, to smoke good cigars if he cared for smoking, and to give suitable vails to servants. Poor old Lord Grooge excites the pity of menials at every house where he calls; and when visiting at a house where he is unknown, to the understrappers he has to give his name before he can obtain a civil answer. The footmen all take him for a beggar.

The worst of it is that persons who are ignorant of the poor Old Boy's circumstances take him for a miser, which he is not. He has

no hoard of gold concealed in a stocking; and if he should die during the last days of a quarter, it will doubtless be found that he has not left a guinea in cash. His troubles come of his inability to make the two ends meet. Even for such poor things as he buys he probably pays much dearer than he ought; for, keen as he may be at a bargain, the hucksters, who know him to be a lord, are keener still.

He is a widower; and his son, who is doing well in a Government office, contributes nothing to his maintenance. There is even some ugly story of young Grooge having inherited 600*l.* a year from his mother, and having kept it all for himself, unheeding the remonstrances of the family lawyer, who hinted that it would be a kindness to allow my lord a small annuity, to enable him to end his days in decent comfort. The Old Boy never makes any allusion to his family affairs. He talks kindly of his son Tom, and shakes hands with him when they meet. He does not strive to excite compassion for his poverty; he would rather like to conceal it if he could; but he cannot, any more than a man can conceal a hacking cough.

When one sees a lord of good degree and connections 'pulling the devil by the tail' it must mean that he is very honest or very dull, for a peerage is a good capital by itself, if properly worked. But Lord Grooge is both honest and dull. He would not do a deliberately dishonest thing, and his timidity keeps him from making money by ways which the world does not consider dishonourable, but which he does, with his old-fashioned notions. He would not sell his name to a joint-stock company, and has once or twice missed making a fortune by this scrupulousness. All the offers made him did not proceed from adventurers. He was invited to let his name figure on the prospectuses of several concerns which are now doing well—hotels, aquariums, and the like—but it seemed to him as if the mere fact of letting his name appear would involve him in terrible responsibilities. He never believes that a new venture will succeed. Harkening sceptically to the tempter's voice, he finds objections, shrugs his shoulders, pooh-poohs, and finally says, 'No, thank you.'

It is more in his line to accept presents from rich, but undoubtedly respectable, parvenus whom he has introduced into society. He would not take money, but would accept a horse, an antique ring, or a picture. He will even hint at his readiness to accept a *douceur* of this sort if it be not offered him; for he is an

adroit cadger, and as soon as he has got the gift he sells it, often miserably below its value. This being known has injured his reputation not a little, and he passes for a far more roguish Old Boy than if he had filled his pockets with the spoil of company shareholders. He has been accused of bespeaking the electoral influence of his brother peers on behalf of ambitious 'new men,' who had paid him; and some irreverent fellows pretend that he would stand on his head if you were to bet him five shillings he would not.

Women, who dislike Shabby Old Boys, are naturally foremost in ridiculing Lord Grooge's doings; and the only ones who say a good word for him are middle-class women, proud at having a lord on their visiting-list. Even these, however, wish that the Old Boy would not show himself at their parties in such tatterdemalion garb. His gloves, coat, and black-satin waistcoat are shiny with age; and his practice of coming to parties on foot, with his trousers turned up and goloshes over his boots, naturally evokes derisive comments from servants as also from neighbours, at whose houses Lord Grooge does not visit.

I believe that of late years the Old Boy goes out less and less; some say because he grudges the expense of a clean shirt; others, because people are shy of inviting him, having caught him thrusting sandwiches and macaroons into his pockets at a stand-up supper. There is no guessing what the truth is, when Society takes to giving a man a bad name; but anyhow, I would note that it is not mispent charity to let the Old Boy have a dinner now and then, for he pays his score in the coin of civility, and can tell a good anecdote or two when the wine is alcoholic enough to make him lively.

XIII.

'OLD CURIOSITY.'

IF you are in the habit of attending Christie & Manson's you must have noticed old Lord Packham, who is a frequent bidder at the sales. A little wizen old gentleman, with a high gill-collar and a stock, a hat perched on the back of his head, and a brown topcoat, which he hugs round him as if he were chilly. He holds an umbrella under his arm, and keeps his hands clasped in front of

him. They are covered with black gloves, many sizes too large, which are unbuttoned, for the greater convenience of drawing off when Lord Packham bids. He always bids by holding up a shrivelled forefinger; and that little limb is good—as the auctioneer



knows—for tens of thousands of pounds. It never goes up except when Lord Packham has resolved to obtain the object offered for sale; and once lifted, it never goes down again until its owner has triumphed.

There are legends of Homeric battles which the old lord has

waged with his cheque-book against Jews, Philistines, and even nations, who were disputing with him over a picture which he fancied. Being patriotic, he gives in when the trustees of the National Gallery enter the lists, but he will not surrender to the representatives of any foreign Government. He has often carried away paintings which were coveted by France for the Louvre, and Bavaria for the Pinacothek. On a certain occasion, when a Murillo seemed too dear to the British Government, he outbid the agent of France, and then presented the picture to the National Gallery.

Balzac has often remarked in his novels that the mania for collecting things is a primary symptom of madness. If this were true, Lord Packham must long ago have been pronounced insane; for he began collecting franks and autographs when he was at school, and has gone on forming stocks of miscellaneous valuables for the last sixty years. He has the completest selection of coins extant, and above two hundred albums filled with the choicest engravings. His library is almost unrivalled by that of any private person; for though it is not large, comprising only some two thousand volumes, these are the pick of the finest editions.

Lord Packham has never collected live-stock. He is even overprompt to discern the notes in others' eyes, not perceiving the beam in his own, and he laughs at those who take pleasure in amassing perishable things. All the objects which he stores up are such as he hopes will increase in value as years roll on. A prophetic intuition as to the probability of a fall in the value of precious stones always deterred him from spending money upon diamonds, though often sorely tempted to do so; and he was mighty pleased when the discovery of Cape diamonds justified his forebodings, by causing these brilliants to decline twenty-five per cent.

Lord Packham is often duped; for it is impossible for a man to become a finished connoisseur in all branches of art, especially if he takes up suddenly with some new hobby and rides it hard. The Old Boy never makes mistakes about a picture or an engraving, for his eyes and fingers have become as experienced in judging these things as a bank-cashier's are in perceiving the genuineness of a bank-note; but some time ago, for instance, he was seized with the mania for collecting old armour and arms, and this led him into curious snares. Helmets of Julius Cæsar, breastplates of Charle-

magne, swords which had dangled on the hips of the Black Prince, were proffered on all sides for his acceptance.

An enterprising manufacturer of antiquities invested a considerable sum in sending an artist to copy the armour of Henry VIII. which figures in the Tower—wrought steel, inlaid and arabesqued with gold; and having bribed a needy German baron to affirm that it had been in the possession of his family for centuries, he sold it to Lord Packham for about twice the modern value of the original. Meanwhile his lordship had purchased from other traders the battle-axe which Robert Bruce broke on Henry de Bohun's head, the dagger with which Ravallac slew Henri IV., and the cross-bow used by William Tell in splitting the apple. He was bargaining for the sword used by Charles II. in knighting the loin of beef, when a friend interposed, and taught him by what sure signs old steel might be recognised.

When Lord Packham is hoaxed he makes no outcry, but requests the vendor to refund his illgotten gains. If the man refuses, my lord puts the sham article into a special museum of his own, which is called 'The Museum of Forgeries,' and which has a printed catalogue, setting forth minutely all the particulars of the purchase, with the vendor's name, and a statement of the reasons he gave for not making honest restitution. Tradesmen who aim at respectability cannot afford to be thus advertised in a catalogue which circulates amongst all his lordship's friends; and it has more than once happened that a person who had refused restitution at first has deemed it prudent to act honestly afterwards, though his repentance may have come too late to save his character.

Lord Packham never sell things he has bought, but he sometimes makes presents to monarchs or princes, who may have expressed a very eager longing to possess some treasure in his collection. He does this spontaneously, at the first request or not at all. He never reconsiders a refusal, and all arts of diplomacy would be exercised on him in-vain, if he had once made up his mind not to part with the article solicited. But he is a very thorough gentleman, and always wraps up a 'no' in considerate language; neither do his refusals ever depend on the intrinsic value of the thing asked for. He will bestow a treasure which has cost him thousands of pounds more readily than a miniature portrait on china which he got for a few guineas. The Bourbon family have often tried, but in vain, to obtain from him a medallion portrait of Louis XVII., worn by

Marie Antoinette ; but he surrendered obligingly enough a dressing-case, with gold mountings, which had belonged to the unfortunate Queen.

Lord Packham's relatives live in chronic despair at his extravagances, which divert from their pockets the streams of his great wealth. He does little for them, and does not even promise that his wondrous collection shall be theirs when he dies. He has often been heard to say that one should not throw pearls before creatures who cannot appreciate them ; and all his nephews and nieces have noticed that when he converses with them he puts insidious questions as to their taste for this or that sort of curiosity. The relative who passes a successful examination under these queries is sure of a pleasant nod and a kind word thereafter ; but he or she who falls into the trap, and commits himself or herself to a Philistine utterance, must expect nothing but coldness from that day.

Lord Packham will not suffer his manias to be criticised ; he will not entertain so much as a word of discussion on the propriety of his often exorbitant investments. His money is his, to do with as he pleases. He owes no man a penny, and is fairly entitled to spend all he likes on things which suit him. If England were governed by French laws the Old Boy's relatives would certainly try to have him laid under an 'interdict,' that they might get the management of his property into their hands. But our law-courts luckily still hold by the doctrine expressed in some comic song :—

'I don't see that a man his reason loses
Because he spends his money as he chooses.'

XIV.

AN OLD COURTIER.

I AM led into talking of courtiers after sketching Lord Packham, because looking lately over one of the latter's famous albums of engravings I came upon a picture which was entitled 'Le Jeu du Roi.' It represented the scene in the great gallery of mirrors at Versailles, on an evening when King Louis XV. was playing at cards, sur-

rounded by his Court. The large round table in the centre of the engraving is that where the King is seated. Other tables are distributed about the room for the accommodation of princes and princesses of the blood, each of whom is having his or her private game. Hundreds of figures of noblemen and noblewomen, officers of the guard, pages and maids of honour, all superbly dressed, animate the scene, over which the rays of a thousand wax-candles are supposed to shed their light. A Court in those days must have been truly magnificent, and one can sympathize with the bitter grief of those luckless nobles who for some peccadillo were exiled from it. The Court was then, indeed, something more than the place where the King lived. It was the focus of all the polite and intellectual life of the country; it comprised all the attractions which are now found in clubs and social gaieties. It was the essence of society, and no society outside it was worth the name.

Things had already changed vastly by the time when that excellent Old Boy, Lord D'Oyley—then Mr. D'Oyley—was appointed equerry in waiting to George IV. The English Court had never been so splendid an affair as the French, and by the beginning of the present century such little lustre as had lingered about it during the early period of the Georges had quite waned. Nevertheless, the Court which George IV. held at the Brighton Pavilion had its period of comparative brilliancy; and young Mr. D'Oyley learned in its precincts how to bow and scrape very prettily.

He seems to have been a well-looking youngster then, and was agreeable from being very anxious to make his way. An old peer of humorous turn, from whom he had asked advice as to his behaviour in the Royal palace, had said to him good-humoredly, 'You must follow three rules: speak well of everybody; ask for every post that falls vacant; and sit down whenever you get the chance.'

Young D'Oyley did not get the chance of sitting down often, for equerries are expected to make use of their legs at Court; nor did he think it expedient to ask for every post that fell vacant, being satisfied for the present with the one he had got; but he took care to speak well of everybody, and this did him much good. It is a most difficult thing to find something pleasant to say of everybody; if you have any doubts on the subject, try it. Young D'Oyley found that by persistently praising bores, muffs, toadies, jades, and persons of small wit and loose morals generally, he earned the good

favour of a very influential section of society. Perhaps the most influential; for good men if they have influence do not trouble themselves to exercise it in order to reward the polite things which are said of them, and which they feel to be only their due, whereas it is a good investment to lend praise to people who stand sorely in need of an honest name.

Young D'Oyle by his mellifluousness of speech earned promotion, wealth by a good marriage, and then a title. He was made a Groom of the Bedchamber to the Sailor-King Billy—whose bedchamber, maybe, had little need of grooming. He next became Comptroller of the Pantry to her present Majesty, and *afterwards* rose to the high post of Introducer of Ambassadors. For his graceful way of discharging these functions he was raised to the peerage, and is now, or was until recently, Master of her Majesty's Beagles—a post much coveted, and always hotly fought for by antechamber intrigues.

I wish I could give you an idea of the noble figure which Lord D'Oyley cuts when mounted and surrounded by his Beagles, on the day of some great meet near Windsor or elsewhere. He looks the pink of exquisites, and has a manner of raising his hat in response to the bowings of the Hunt which is simply perfection. But he appears to even better advantage, if possible, at St. James's Palace on Levée and Drawing-room days. Dressed in his scarlet and gold uniform, his kerseymere breeches, and star of knighthood, he forms one of the brilliant throng who cluster behind the Sovereign round the steps of the throne.

He ranks among the great officers of State. He takes no part in the ushering in of the persons who do homage to the Queen, having finished this business when he resigned his post as Introducer of Ambassadors; but he has an eye for all the etiquette of the place, and not a blunder made in bowing or curtseying escapes him. He knows to a nicety whether So-and-So has stooped too much in kissing her Majesty's hand, or whether my Lady Such-and-Such a one did not bend enough in performing her obeisance. He is careful, however, to keep all his impressions to himself, and friends who catch his eye always find it beaming with benevolent approval.

Lord D'Oyley's conversation is mild as sweetened gruel, and yet it has a refined flavour of its own comparable to vanilla. He never speaks ill of a soul; but he has a way of varying his praise which makes it impossible for one to find his discourse tedious or absurd.

He is too good a courtier to fall into the error of flattering recklessly by attributing to people qualities which they do not possess; he rather makes it his business to think over the qualities which people may have, and to name them. In some cases this must have been difficult work.

He is especially tender with the reputations of young women, and with the good looks of those who are past their prime. It may not always be a compliment to say of a woman of forty that she is virtuous (this may sometimes sound like an epigram), but it is sweet praise to call her seductive. Similarly as to men; if an old fellow be so utterly crabbed in temper, and dull of intellect, that the ordinary observer can detect no good point in him, it is quite safe to talk of his subtle wit and inward benevolence. When it comes to statesmen, Lord D'Oyley has always found that an allusion to admirable business aptitudes constitutes the chief compliment to which politicians aspire in these days, when politics are conducted on the principles which regulate a counting-house.

Lord D'Oyley has often been abroad on official missions, and knows every Court in Europe as well as our own. He has escorted Royal Princes on their travels; he has been sent on Garter missions in the company of heralds and pursuivants to buckle pieces of blue velvet round the august legs of continental monarchs; and he has represented the Queen of England at the christenings of Serene German princelings. The better to shine on such festive occasions he early devoted himself to the study of languages, and is now a consummate linguist. He owns a polyglot Swiss valet, with whom he talks French, German, and Italian on alternate days. Some years ago he planned the delicate flattery of learning Danish, in order to converse with the Princess of Wales; but he fell into the unfortunate error of choosing a professor who taught him a brogue-Danish, something like the English which an Irishman might impart to a Dane. The Princess laughed kindly as my lord muttered his first words, and the shrewd peer did not repeat his experiment.

Everybody likes Lord D'Oyley, and yet I much doubt whether he has ever given any one reason to be thankful for services rendered. He has possibly some influence if he would use it; but he never will, except for his own sons. He is one of those Old Boys who can act better than any high comedian, and convey in the most lifelike way his deep regret at being unable to do what is

asked of him. He also puts you off with promises, or passes you on to some other Noble Old Boy who has less influence than himself, but who, from vanity, likes to be courted, and who will not only make you promises, but expect your gratitude for leaving them unfulfilled.

He is a great sayer of honeyed nothings, and his memory for faces is so good that he never passes by a physiognomy with which he has been made acquainted, even for a minute. It has been a long-standing reproach against courtiers that they turn their backs upon people in adversity, but Lord D'Oyley never does. He has a compassionate word for people in trouble, and never ignores a person whom he has once known prosperous, even if he meet him in some out-of-the-way place, dowdy and penniless. It should be added, however, that he guards himself as much as possible from such encounters by keeping aloof from out-of-the-way places.

There is nothing ludicrous in the courtier's trade when it is carried on in such wise as to hurt no one; and it seems to me that an Old Boy who, like Lord D'Oyley, spends his time in lubricating the wheels of social intercourse is not unprofitable in his generation. He is not wanting in dignity, for he never lays himself open to insult; nor in character, for nobody can taunt him with having done a shabby thing. It may be that he is one of those who prevent princes from hearing the truth as to what goes on around them; but is it so necessary that princes should hear the truth? They are just as happy in their ignorance, and their subjects would not be the happier if they were made wise. Besides, princes are not so lacking in perception as one might suppose.

One of this illustrious race was talking privately with a Minister in a boudoir at an evening party when Lord D'Oyley, who did not know there was anybody in the room, entered it. He forthwith made a low bow, which his Royal Highness returned, with an air of vexation at having been disturbed. 'Suppose we turn our backs,' suggested the Minister, adding something about courtiers being shy of intruding when you show them the cold shoulder. 'Oh, it would be of no use,' answered H.R.H.; 'if D'Oyley saw nothing of me but the b—ack, he would bow all the same.'

Doubtless there are many other well-known types of Old Boys whom I have left unnoticed. But my object has been rather to jot down personal reminiscences than to draw up a catalogue. Those

to whom I have alluded—not unkindly, I hope—may serve as representatives of the whole class, and so much the better if there were no downright knave among them; for I like to think of Old Boys as outgrowing the vices of youth more often than its virtues. Experience is worth nothing to an Old Boy if it has not taught him to be honest and honourable—and I think it generally has taught him that lesson more frequently than any other.



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